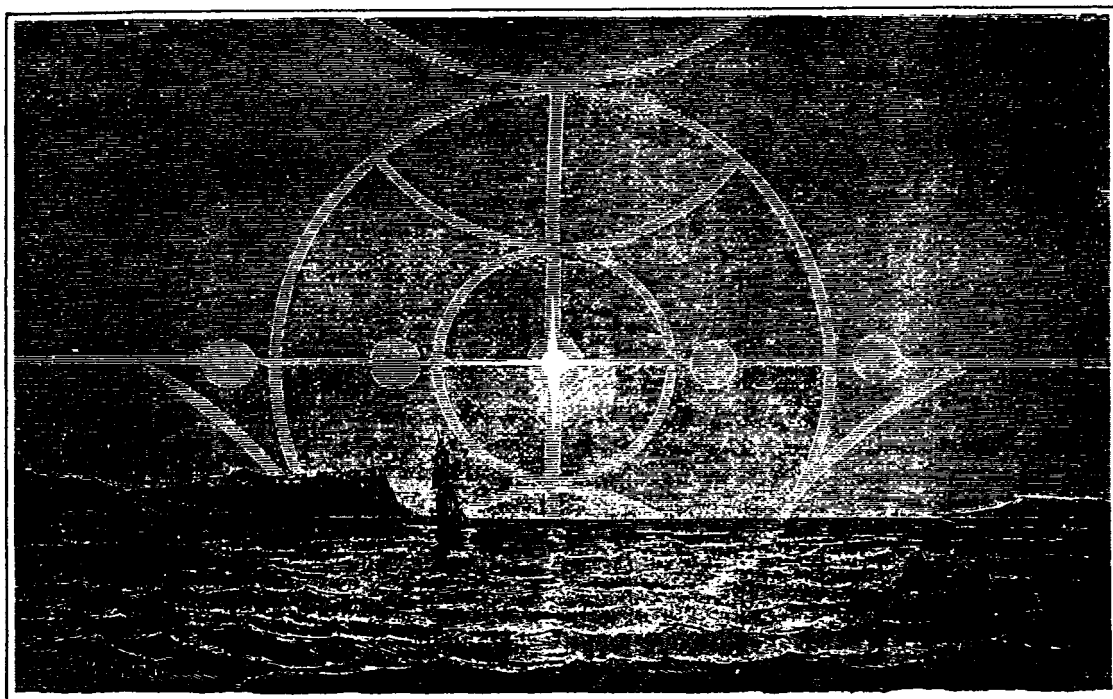
Miscellany of fortean curiosities

THE NEWS

MYSTERY GROUP-ILLNESSES and PHANTOM SMELLS 9



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THE NEWS

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Volume2 No1 (8). Feb 75.

1) Well, we made it , you and us ! The start of our second volume/year. Buts lets have no illusions - we are not yet out of the woods, costs spiralling rapidly while our sub-list grows so slowly -- so do all you can - a personal recommendation goes a long way. In March the postal costs will about double, and more paper and labor increases are due - the only way to beat it is to have more subscribers.

2) From this issue on, you will notice a new ingredient. Our Christmas present to you all is a set of about 30 headings illustrated by the incomparable Hunt Emerson, to whom our thanks. The rest will appear as the data dictates.

3) Also from this ish we experiment with envelope substitutes. Its a crazy sign of the times that a plastic bag and a couple of sticky lables work out about half the cost of a paper envelope. So please let us know if the bags cause any problems.

4)We had hoped to mail the Index with this ish but the damned thing is turning out to be bigger than we thought. Its 2/3s done - and will definitely come out with the next issue.

5) That sharp old lady, Ariadne, writing in the NEW SCIENTIST (14 Nov 74) cried to the Gods for someone to found an 'oldspaper' that would provide the endings to the stories that started off well on the front pages, and then nothing more is heard -- like, she says: "..that Japanese nuclear ship which we left, idle upon the ocean, its reactor unaccountably stuffed with socks." ((Anyone with any info on this please, please let us know)) But why stop at endings? Sometimes people wonder just what THE NEWS is about (us too), and the expression that comes to mind is that we present stories of beginnings, middles and ends - but who knows which is what? It would be impossible to claim that we are recording in any completeness or truth. But some of you have strange inclinations, and our notes are to be read as clues, by which, if you're so inclined, you may pick up a trail of sorts. Nevertheless we do our mortal best at recording what comes our way, and our pretence at indexing the uncategorizable (?) is in Reality only an approximation to usefulness. We mirror the vapourings and vagaries of existance; we mingle with skeletons in closets; we run after things best ignored, prying into dustbins and lifting carpets to see what's new; we sing happily in the red rain, or to the gentle patter of frogs on our umberella; but perhaps most damning of all is the reading of old newspapers spread on a wet kitchen floor. Not for nothing is our motto: "Yesterday's news Tomorrow!" Madam, look no further!

NEXT ISSUE: Well John Stonehouse and the Vanishing Circus eventually turned up, but we have some notes on people who didn't; more Mystery and Escaped Animal stories; Antiquities; and some outbrakes of Fireballs or whatever they were.

THE INTERNATIONAL FORTEAN ORGANIZATION

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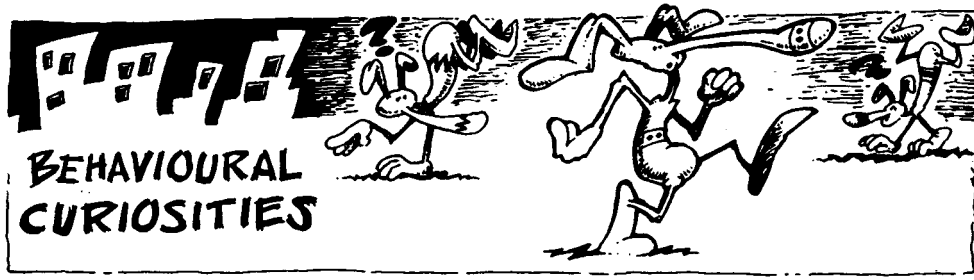


As man grapples with the task of unravelling animal speech, it has often occurred to us to wonder just what the animals make of all this? Do some attempts to communicate come across as mad ravings, for example, or impossible but vivid exhortations to go away and make one's self pregnant? We have a few assorted notes under the unexpected nuisances of animal sounds -- eg: recordings of wolf-howls being played by scientists to lure wolves out of the Shoshone National Forest, Wyoming, for census and study. It seems their population has dwindled through trapping, poisoning etc to about 20 - which is not much wolf in an awful lot of forest. (New York Times, 10 April 74. Credit: Mark Hall.)

And when five sugarcane toads escaped from a biology teacher's house in Darwin, Australia - samples of the toads' mating calls were broadcast to all radios as part of a public warning, because these 8" long critters can squirt a poison capable of killing dogs,cats and pigs. (Though the sensibleness of this escapes us, as not many dogs, cats and pigs listen to radios these days - at least not with the rising cost of long-life (joke) batteries, today. Anyway, these toads are described as walking vacuum-cleaners, displaying much civic responsibility in hopping about eating "cigarette-buts, ping-pong balls and other roadside debris." And if you haven't seen many ping-pong balls littering the streets of Darwin, pause to reflect on the efficacy of these toads. (San Francisco Examiner & Chronicle, 14 July 74. Credit: Loren Coleman.)

Now just imagine if all the sugarcane toads in the Darwin area converged on the radios booming out their favourite music - hmmmm! And Darwin was flattened recently by a 'hurricane', was it not?. There's a lesson to be learnt there somewhere. And here too! We read of Mr Noel McCabe having a peaceful evening at home in Kingston St, Derby. What could be more harmless, we ask, than to have the family gathered round the record player listening to Frankie Laine singing "The Cry of the Wild Goose"? Ahhh! You guessed! A window explodes inwards as a Canada goose crashes into their bedroom. And as though that's not enough, one came down outside a hospital at Aston near Derby, and another hit the pavement in the Chaddesden suburb of Derby. Inspector Farrow of the RSPCA said: "It's either an unbelievable coincidence, or Frankie Laine's record must have had a very weird effect on Canada geese. I have never known anything like it." (Thanks to Paul Screeton for this honey from the Yorkshire Post, 19 Nov 74.)

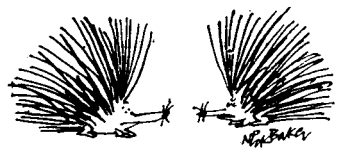
But we do know of things like it. For instance - A couple sleeping in their 7th floor apartment in Vienna, were woken up one night by the crashing of glass in their living room and rushed in to find a dazed and injured black swan. The most logical reason proposed seems to be based on the idea that it did not see the window in the dark - but surely that little dark patch is regularly spaced with others in a larger lighter monolithic and more visible bulk of building? Anyway there is no evidence that anyone below was conducting a well known pas-des-deux. (Sunday Express, 4 Aug 74.) But we don't think it wise to tempt the Cosmic Jokers too much, and have forsworn our blood-curdling renditions of "See you later Alligator " in the bath, and "Nellie the Elephant" in the broom cupboard under the stairs.

There is always the sneaky suspicion that some animals are having a great joke at our expense. Consider the blackbird that has become the bane of the Stationmaster at Berne-Stoeckacker, Switzerland. They have converted to hand signals to send off trains because the crafty devil had got the guard's whistle off to a tee. (Sun, 21 Sept 74. Credit: AF Ashcroft.) And we rather like the story of the black labrador that set up a dismal howling beside a pond on Bournemouth's Turbary Common. It was led away several times but kept returning -- and so local police fearing the worst called in the firebrigade, and the faithful devoted 4-footed friend watched with great interest as they set about draining 20,000 gallons in a search for a body. When they got to the bottom, they found instead the usual and traditional still life of old bedsprings, prams, boots and car doors draped in ooze. They looked around for the dog, but found nothing there either. In a face-saving statement police and firemen declared that at least the pond was now less of a hazard to children. (Bournemouth Evening Echo, 17 April 74. Credit: S Mucha.) And one more pond to swell the thousands that vanish from the English landscape every year.

Havoc was also created by 25 cows in the Italian ski-resort of Cortina d'Ampezzo. The local municipal brass band passing the end of their field in splendour and full cry was too much for these culture-starved creatures -- they burst through the fence, and butted the shiny instruments to the ground, licking them affectionately and gazing at them in adoration. A note in the report

said that it took an hour to drag them away. (Weekend, 31 Jan/6 Feb 73. Credit: A Smith.)

The normally peaceful air of Preston Down Road, Paignton, Devon,was rent by a high pitched buzzing which was likened to a badly punished power saw - so residents call in police, and police set to tracking down the noise -- they found a pair of hedgehogs locked in passionate embrace, and serenading each other. (Daily Mirror, 22 Aug 74.)



"Be gentle with me, Harry!"

This brings to mind the mystery of the presence of porcupines in Devon, more on which you'll find in our "Swarms & Migrations" section.

Not all of these silly stories turn out happily, and a fine example of the thin line between farce and tragedy was the fate of Albert, a 45-year-old farmer, whose 'Accidental Death' was the verdict of an inquest in Colombo, Sri Lanka. He had a favourite bull -treated it like a pet. One night he got home drunk, tied the bull to a tree, and began to sing his heart out to it. The bull either loved it or hated it, for he broke away and made his point by dancing a fandango - all over Albert, for whom it was all over too. (Daily Mirror, 24 Aug 74. Cr: Steve Moore.)

RESCUES BY ANIMALS.

One of the few occasions where we have received notes on an incident from more than one person was on the rescue, last summer, of a woman by a turtle, in the Philippines. Mrs Candelaria Villanueva, 52, was on board the 'Aloha' when it caught fire and sank 600 miles south of Manila. She said she had been floating for more than 12 hours (with a life-jacket) when a giant sea turtle "with a head as big as that of a dog."(1) appeared beneath her. She was spotted on 4 June, having been in the water 48 hours, by a Philippine navy vessel, 'Kalantia', who thought she was clinging to an oildrum. "Someone threw her a life ring. The moment she transferred her hold to the ring, the drum sank. We did not realise it was a giant turtle until we started hauling up the woman, for the turtle was beneath her apparently propping her up. It even circled the area twice before disappearing into the depths of the sea, as if to reassure itself that its former rider was in good hands."(2) One report added a detail not mentioned by others. Mrs Villanueva said that another , tiny turtle climbed on her back. "The small turtle bit me gently every time I felt drowsy. Maybe it wanted to prevent me from submerging my head in the water and drowning."(1) Compiled from: 1) News of the World, 28 July 74. 2) Knoxville (Tennessee) News-Sentinel, 24 June 74. Cr: David Dunthorn. Others) Minneapolis (Minn) Star, 26 June 74. Cr: Mark Hall. Daily Mirror, 24 June 74. Cr: R Forrest, DJ McAllister, S Moore.

Recently, we were struck by an odd story told by Max Freedom Long (Case 37, in his 'RECOVERING THE ANCIENT MAGIC.') Polynesians, he said, believed the souls of babies who died in birth transmigrated to inhabit some animals. In this case, a fisherman whose boat had sunk in rough seas, called out to his 'Shark-son' to aid him. A shark did come, and not only kept him floating but towed him back to shore.

Whether you believe that or not is up to you, but curious things like this do happen whether we can explain them or not. For instance, in Weekend, 6-12 Feb 74, you will find a first-hand account by a man who found himself waistdeep in quicksand on his uncle's farm on Darling Downs, South Queensland, Australia, and no one to help him. Soon the cows from the surrounding fields gathered round the pool, curious about his antics. Then an old brindle cow cautiously came down to drink, and eyeing him all the time, made very slowly toward him. He made a grab which startled her, but she returned and offered her horns to him. As she lifted her head and stepped carefully backwards, he felt his feet squelching out of their trap. She towed him to firm ground and then trundled off to join her mates. (Apologies for losing note of who to credit on this.)

Dog rescues are fairly numerous. An Alsatian saving an 8-year-old girl from a near fatal attack by a 700lb boar, can be read in the Sunday Express 10 March 74. And a collection of similar stories appeared in Weekend for 27 Feb/5 Mar 74. Credit: Anthony Smith.

And as we go to press, word comes of a blind and elderly lady who mistook the edge of the harbour-wall at Torquay, Devon, for the edge of the pavement and fell in. Without much hesitation, Ruby, her two-year-old Labrador guide-dog, whom she had had only two months, jumped in after her - and pushed her gently toward the harbour steps, keeping her afloat until human recuers hauled her to safety. The Sun, 21 Jan 75.

LATE NEWS / LATE NEWS / LATE NEWS / LATE NEWS

INFO JOURNAL 14 -- Contains: 'Bang!' a 6½ page compilation of 'Mystery Explosions', rumblings and 'meteors' between 1969 and 1974; many from our own pages. 'The Maps and the Galaxies',by Charles Hapgood. 'About Monsters and Such' by FW Holiday. "Phantom Butchers", more on the mid-west cattle mutilations. "Phantom Islands". 'Anomalous Electrical Phenomena' 'The Ethiopean Discoveries' by Stuart Greenwood. 'Falls'. 'Mountain of Death', about the mysterious Black Mountain in Australia. "The Great Florida Mystery" of lights and strange goings-on in the swamp. 'The Delphos Wolf-girl' ((alluded to by Mark Hall, back in NEWS 7/p14)) -- A batch is on the way by seamail to UK subscribers who will receive them in due course - Ed.

A MESSAGE FROM MAGONIA

by JEROME CLARK

Late in March 1971 I was employed as associate editor of Fate magazine (1) in Highland Park, Illinois. One day, while perusing a pile of clippings readers had sent us over the past week, I came upon some fascinating articles about a series of creature sightings in central Oklahoma in February. Mary Fuller, Fate's editor, gave me permission to phone the witnesses and to write up their stories for the magazine. (The piece eventually appeared in the September 1971 issue as "'Manimals' Make Tracks in Oklahoma.")

The original sightings, the ones the papers had published, were of the by-now familiar NAWPS (North American Woodpersons), ie. quasi-anthropoids on the order of Bigfoot. The more I talked with the people involved, the more I heard about other kinds of encounters with even stranger animals. Someone who had had an experience would tell me: "My friend so-and-so saw something, too, one time." By the time I'd tracked all this down, I had amassed quite a collection of reports.

The weirdest one of all came from Mrs. Lawrence Lamb of Calumet, Oklahoma, who said that early one evening in 1951 she stepped out of her farmhouse to check on the cattle, walked to the top of a hill between the farmhouse and the pasture and glanced down to see something that "looked like a cross between a wolf and a deer."

The creature's head and body superficially resembled a deer's. The thing stood on four thin deer-like legs, with huge pads for feet, and had long hair slightly lighter in colour than a German shepherd dog's. It was larger than a dog or a wolf and had small pointed ears and a bushy tail.

After watching it for about 30 seconds (its head was turned away from her), Mrs Laub tossed a stick toward the animal, attracting its attention. It stood watching her, apparently unafraid.

Unnerved, Mrs Laub beat a retreat, all the while glancing over her shoulder at the animal, which continued to study her. Her husband had seen the same or similar creature two years previously, and in the meantime neighbours had reported coming upon strange tracks in their fields.

I had never heard of anything answering this creature's description and consequently I was more than slightly interested. I asked Loren Coleman and John Keel, America's foremost authorities on these questions, if they were aquainted with beasts of this kind, and both said no. Keel suggested it might be a "one-of-a-kind transmogrification."

Some time later, as I was visiting my parents in Canby, Minnesota, my father, a veteran outdoorsman, told me of a weird animal he had encountered that spring. His story astounded me (I had not mentioned Mrs Laub's experience to him and the Fate article had not yet appeared) and I had him draw up a statement. It follows:

'About 1.00pm on March 27, 1971, HH Christensen of Canby, Minnesota, and I were driving north on the county highway, 8½ miles northwest of Canby where the highway crosses the Florida Creek. About halfway up the hill Howard, who was driving, slammed on the brakes and exclaimed: "What the devil is that?" Approximately 50 to 60 yards to the west of the highway in a 'pocket' on the hillside stood an animal that at first glance appeared to be a small deer. It was standing broadside to us, facing north, and in the open (no brush or weeds to obscure our view). The sun was shining brightly and visibility was perfect. The animal was about the size of a three- or four-month-old whitetail deer, of about 50 or 60 pounds weight, I would guess. Its head was unusually small, as were the ears; it was covered with short hair, red-brown in colour, similar to the summer coat of the whitetailed deer. Its tail appeared to hang below the level of the 'knees' on the rear legs, and was black, and appeared to be similar to that of a horse. It certainly was not like any deer either of us had ever seen before.

'After observing it for a couple of minutes, during which time the animal did not move , or even turn its head to look at us, I suggested making it run so that we could observe if it moved like a deer. I climbed out of the car and stood on the near shoulder of the road, and the animal completely ignored me. I yelled and waved my arms - still no response from the animal.

I then informed Howard that I would make it run, whereupon I took my rifle from the car (we were on a varmint-hunting trip), and fired a shot about 30 feet to the rear of the animal; it raised its head and looked at me, then resumed its original stance. I fired again, this time aiming at a point within two feet of its hind feet, and the bullet threw dirt on its legs. This time the animal responded by slowly turning away (to the west) and walking very sedately over to a brush patch about 30 feet away, where it calmly lay down and proceeded to ignore us. With Howard laughing at me because I could not frighten the animal, I put my rifle away and we drove on.

'Howard and I have hunted deer and have observed thousands of them in the wild of this area. If this animal had been 'just' a deer, Howard would not have stopped or questioned what he was seeing; in fact he probably would not even have commented on seeing a deer, as they are so commonplace in this area. And for my part, I certainly would not have even considered getting out of the car to 'scare' it.

'Whitetail deer fawns are born about the middle of April in this latitude and are spotted for the first three or four months of their lives. By the end of March last year's fawns weigh over a hundred pounds and like the adult deer still have their dark grey winter coat of hair.

The following day I drove by this place to see if I could see our strange animal again, but did not see it. However, I saw three mature deer and two last-year fawns, which crossed the road in front of me within a quarter-mile of the place where the sighting had been made. These deer were all dark-grey with their winter coat, and the two fawns were of normal size.

(sgd) DR Clark.

HH Christensen has read this statement and concurs with it.'

The strangest part of all this, of course, is that it occurred the same week that I uncovered Mrs Laub's 20-year-old experience. The Laub's report, and my father's, are the only ones I know of involving this bizarre creature which exhibits no fear of human beings or their weapons.

Recently, while we were discussing the incident, I asked Dad why he had not pursued the creature on foot in order to get a better look at it. His behaviour seemed quite out of character, for Dad is intelligent and highly curious about the world around him.

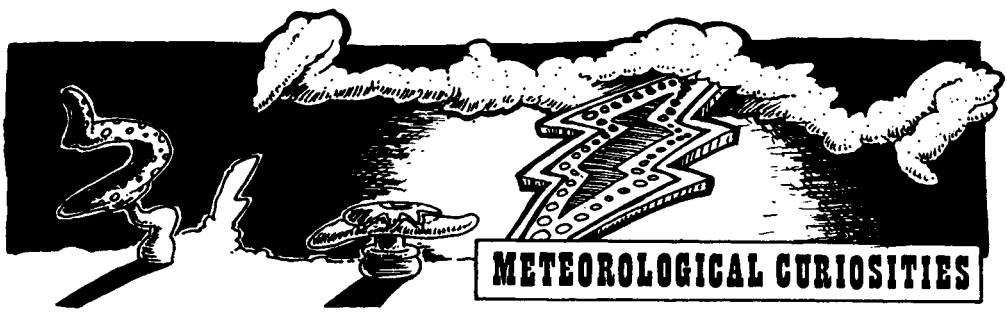
"I don't know," he said, clearly puzzled. "I've often wondered about that."

But that said, the question remains: could all this be a coincidence? Or is that stretching the concept of coincidence much too far?

Or was the creature's later appearance some kind of message to me, or maybe the Phenomenon's idea of a joke? I certainly wish I knew.

□□*□* *□*□*□*□* *□*□*□*

1) The American Fate, not the magazine known to us on this side of the Atlantic. -- Ed.



MOCK SUNS.

Mock suns, or Parhelia, are not particuliarly unusual or unknown, but are nonetheless a striking phenomenon when they do occur. Our interest is also on two other grounds: that a faulty or partial observation, or description may in fact indicate something else, a fireball/ ball lightning, or UFO for instance, so it is useful to know where and when mock suns were observable -- and that, as Fort showed with earthquakes and meteor/aerial lights, there may be hitherto un-noted correlations abounding in such natural phenomena. Mock moons, Parselena, occur too, and the incident described on NEWS 5 p6., an observation made in Sweden in 1869, would seem to be a good example. Our cover illustration of a classic Parhelion is taken from a wonderful (literally) late 19th century encyclopedia called THE WORLD OF WONDERS (Cassell Petter & Galpin; no date in book), containing many items not in Fort's works, or elsewhere for that

matter. So in future issues, not only will we be using it as a source of our wonderful engravings on the cover, but we shall be telling many of its data to record them in a modern reference structure.

But for now, we have two observations of mock suns. The first is an aside reference in a report on the solar eclipse of mid-June 74, and the events around Walpole, a town at the southern tip of Western Australia, the only place in the world to experience a totality of eclipse at that time. Or would have been had not dense clouds settled over the hill with the observatory on it, while all around was clear. The light fell to the intensity of a moonlit night in less than a second, the temperature dropping from 73 to 53 degrees. Cows turned for home; birds fell silent and the night insects started up. It lasted four minutes.

And before this event, by an hour, a false sun appeared in the sky. Surely a sign of the coming practical joke on the astronomers who had planned for the eclipse for 10 feverish months. Details from the Los Angeles (California) Times, 21 June 1974. Credit: Mark Hall.

The second sighting happened a few months after the above, and is reported in a letter to the Daily Mirror, 17 Sept 74. (Credit: Steve Moore.)

> "Did anybody else notice the 'sun dog' or mock sun, the other evening? There seemed to be two suns in the sky. My husband and I knew then that we were in for some rough weather. An old chap told us this weather sign some years ago. He also used to say that when you see shadows in the water, there will be rain or an easterly wind within twentyfour hours. He has been proved right so many times.
>
> Mrs K Mortley. Wylie Rd, Hoo, Kent. "

DARKNESSES AND CLOUDS.

Speaking of clouds 'lurking' almost malevolantly and unexpectedly: We have a note of schoolchildren asking their parish council to investigate their suspicions that clouds hung over their village of Breaston, Derbyshire, while the sun shone brilliantly a couple of miles away. Something was stealing their sunshine. The councillors in turn became worried. "It has become particularly noticeable recently," said one, Mr Reg Gill. The only theory they could come up with, as to why there seemed to be so much cloud over Breaston compared with its surroundings, is that a huge power station a few miles away was creating the clouds artificially to drift to the town where they stay overhead, blocking out the sun. A Central Electricity Generating Board spokesman said vapour from the cooling towers does cause a cloud,but strong sunshine soon dispels it. Daily Express 19 March 1973.

Fort had many notes on unusual darknesses at noon or any other time of day when a darkness is most unexpected. No eclipses or fogs to blame -- normal weather conditions -- then, suddenly, a darkness. Loren Coleman sent us a note from the 'Paul Harvey News', American Broadcasting Corporation, or rather an item from the bulletins read out on 3 April 74 -- so we don't know the actual date of the incident.

> "The Kemps of Peoria, Illinois, were driving in their car a while back on a sunshiny Sunday... When just past Morton, Illinois,on their way to Carlock... Suddenly their car was enveloped in darkness. Mr and Mrs Kamp and their two sons... did not have time to get frightened before it was light again. Thinking they might have passed through a dark cloud, they searched the sky and the horizon, but there were no clouds of any kind... The Kamps have no theory as to what caused the mid-day darkness but they are convinced it was supernatural."

This was read out with a preamble about people seeing Flying Saucers and not daring to tell. We are the last to complain about connexions being made between things... we believe there are cases of 'darknesses' in the UFO experiences -- or rather something acting to suppress information in the visible light spectrum, or even if you want to consider it, depressing the reception in the eye, perhaps acting on the nervous material, even brain, etc etc But we wonder if the newscasters knew this, or did they lump it in with UFOs alongside all other outbreaks of crank?

In November, a group of Michigan farmers paid out £25,000 to a professional rainmaker, Dr Irving P Krick, to strut his stuff. As they stood waiting expectantly, Michael Reinbold, a farmer 150 miles away, became aware of a little black cloud "descending on him from a virtually clear sky." Seconds later he was drenched as five inches of rain came down in two hours on his 800 acres just north of Detroit, during which hail the size of golf balls bounced off everything in sight. "I've never seen anything like it," he said, "This little black cloud just came straight at us." Now he is sueing Dr Krick, a former chief of the US Army Air Force weather forecasting office, for over £15,000 worth of ruined crops. "It's all his fault. You shouldn't mess around with the environment unless you know what consequences your messing will cause." Dr Krick argues that his cloud seeding operation had nothing to do with the events that took place on Reinbold's farm (150 miles distant). If we admit a connexion between the two - we are in a mystery; and if we don't, well we're still stuck with the mystery of the little black cloud. Damned if you do - and damned if you don't. Nothing is said about whether the rainmaker's efforts brought any rain over his client's farms - but no mention is made of <u>them</u> sueing him. Story from the 'America' column in the Daily Mail, 21 November 1974. Credit: Steve Moore.

WHIRLWINDS IN WALES.

If we are to display, as we occasionally do, a more than casual interest in things that fall from the sky, then in all sensibility and good practice, we should balance the other side of the hyphen, and keep an eye on what goes up, or gets up, or is pulled or pushed up. Janet Bord sent us news of a series of notes and letters in the Mid-Wales County Times & Express on whirlwinds in the Welshpool area of Montgomeryshire.

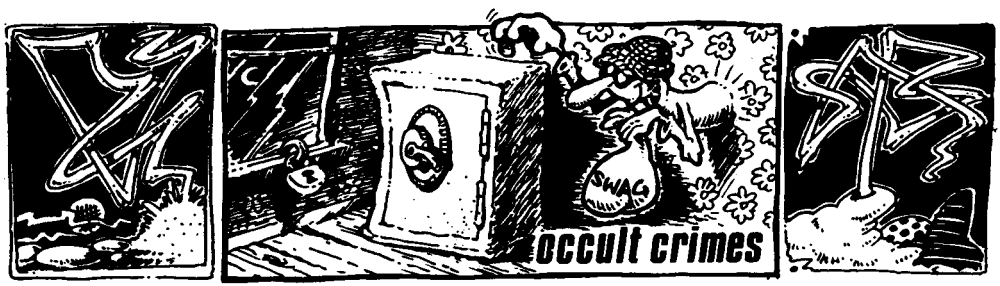
The initial incident occured when children of the Mochdre Primary School, near Newtown, were having their lunch-break. They watched in amazement as a pile of hay was lifted from a nearby field, and carried in the air for nearly ten minutes before breaking up and falling slowly into the fields around the school. The Headmistress, Mrs Marjorie Edwards, said: "I've never seen anything so fantastic in my life. The children were completely flabberghasted. The hay was lifted up as high as the highest little white cloud and drifted for six to seven minutes." This was on the 4th July.

Some questions occur to us, mainly about the wind conditions at the time -- if it was windy (and we admit it does not say whether it was or not) then how can hay rise up, and drift back to roughly the same spot when the 'whirlwind' breaks up. If it was not windy -- did some force pull on the lump of hay, which soon broke up at a height, and, the force, having less grasp on single straws,allows them to fall back...The witnesses can only suppose a whirlwind to explain the lifting. Far-fetched? could be, but anymore than whirlwinds in Wales in the first place? We shall have to find out more.

Another whirlwind was later reported to have happened on the same day, on the farm of Mr W. Summerfield at Llidiart, Moelygarth, Welshpool. Or rather, a 'similar occurrence' was reported from there. And on the 7th, another 'whirlwind' scattered another Welshpool man's harvest over a wide area...smallholder Jack Thomas, of Limekilns, Belan, had just finished turning his hay by hand when it was "scooped up and carried high into the air" where it remained for several minutes before breaking up and falling into the surrounding fields and gardens. Reference is made to other incidents in "recent weeks" on "very hot days, which result in sudden movements of air of this kind." It may be that there are whirlwinds, and things that look like whirlwinds, especially to those who have never seen a whirlwind before -- more information needs to be had before more than that can be said.

In fact the only mention of rising hay being twisted as it went up was in the recollection of a reader in response to the stories above. Mr D Edryn Morris, Ashfields, Rhos Common, Llandrinio, remembered back to mid-July 1941, when he was at Golengoed Farm, Llanwnog, with his late brother, and they saw a "gigantic whirlwind whip a mass of hay more than 200 feet in the air" and deposit it on a neighbour's field. The air had changed, he said, from sun, heat and dryness to sudden coolness, breeze and humidity -- and the whirlwind twisted the hay until it was "gathered into a huge conical 'cock' of hay."

(ontinued on p20.



What a pleasure it is for me to use Hunt's witty illo for this category. Fort said: "I have collected notes upon 'mysterious robberies' wondering whether a teleportative power has ever been used criminally... If a medium could transport seashells from the sea to his cabinet, he could abstract funds from a bank to his pocket... There may be criminal adepts who are not known as mediums." (LO! Ch.4.) Here below are a few 'sealed room' type situations, and odd 'burglaries'.

LOCKED ROOM DEATH RIDDLE.

Batchelor, Anton Przewozny, a 59-year-old farmhand, was found beaten to death in his room on a farm at d'Avrainville, Northern France. The shotgun used as the bludgeon was back in its proper place, and the door was locked from the inside. There was soft soil below the 17ft high window, which was also bolted, but no footprints. Other workers heard his cries for help and banged on the locked door. When his cries stopped, they called the police. Inside the room they found another curious detail -- Anton did not smoke, yet they found an ashtray full of cigarette ends. Daily Mirror, 18 August 1966. Credit: A Smith.

A ONE-LEGGED GHOST.

Police answered a burglar-alarm call from the home of Mr Kenneth Broadhead in Ashill, near Thetford, Norfolk, and they found the house supernaturally secure, with nothing stolen. But

what did make their hair stand on end was the single row of footprints - all made by the same foot - across the floor of a room ending up against a solid brick wall. Then the ghost apparently dematerialised through a door and set off a burglar-alarm. A senior police officer mentioned the tradition of a one-legged Jesuit priest ghost at the house, but added: "Why set off an alarm when you can just melt through a door?" No other details were available. Daily Mirror, 13 Feb 74 -- the incident happening the day before. Credit: Steve Moore, BR Bates & Michael Roberts.

'HOUDINI GANG' RAID STRONGROOM.

£143,000 disappeared from a strongroom at New York's Kennedy Airport on 12 April 1967, and an FBI spokesman confessed their bafflement. Somehow, whoever pulled this off, got past armed guards, a double-locked steel door, into the strongroom and out again, without being seen and without leaving a mark or clue anywhere. The money was part of a delivery from the Indo-China bank of Laos and had arrived on an Air France Jetliner. The theft, if that is what it was, was discovered when an armoured truck came to take the money to a Manhattan bank. The matter was said to be under investigation, and we don't know if it was 'solved' or not. Daily Mirror, 13 April 1967. Credit: Anthony Smith.

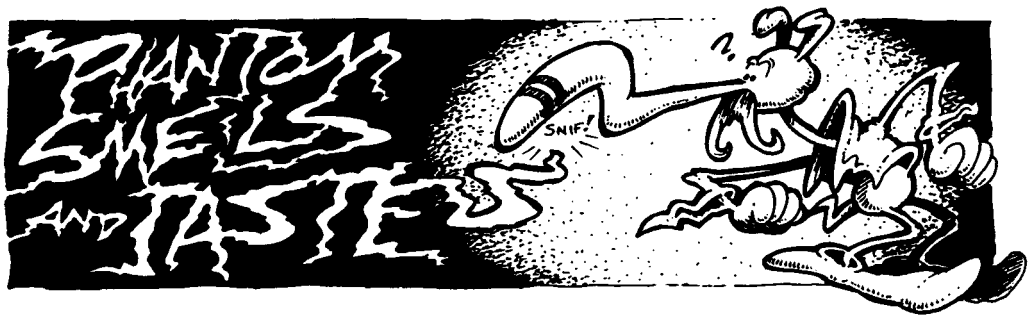
INCENSE HATER PLAGUES CHURCH.

A mystery 'incense hater' is thought by the vicar of a church in Bognor Regis, Sussex, to creep in seconds before a service and hide the censer. And after the services it would turn up again. So the Rev.Sinclair Snow hit upon a plan -- he stopped using incense in his services. We don't know if this fits as an 'Occult crime' but its manic and trivial enough. Sunday Express, 6 Jan 74.

SOME ODD THEFTS.

In March 1974, police were said to be worried by a spate of buglaries in the villages and towns around Guildford, Surrey. During the events, the faces and guts of the redident grandfather clocks were stolen, or otherwise disappeared. To the date of the report 20 homes had so far been left with disemboweled grandfathers. This may be of no consequence whatever, but the impression is given that the gang operating the area, if that is the culprit, is deliberately chosing houses with these familiar horological instruments of our childhood, which when we come to think of it is not only an odd criterion upon which to burgle, but information, the obtaining of which, could make one quite conspicuous. The police theory is that an antique 'ringing' racket is behind the burglaries. They could be right. Daily Express, 16 March 74.

A note in the Weekly News for 28 Sept 74 says that police were "stumped" by a theft in Rose Drive, Chesham, Bucks. Much expensive equipment and other items preferred by thieves with more orthodox tastes, were left untouched. What was missing though, was the lounge door. The paper adds: "It was a perfectly ordinary door." A door with wanderlust may be many things - but not, one would have thought, ordinary.



Toward the end of January 1973 the press spotlight fell on the curious practice of 'Glossolalia' after three members of a fringe sect were found in Yarmouth, exhausted and entranced from three days solid chanting. In the subsequent weeks, more cases, and the bizarre behaviour of 'crazed' 'speaking in tongues' freaks, came to light, causing more than an interested ripple.

But that is not our concern right now. Our eye was caught at the time by a casual reference in a write-up of the Glossolalia fad, by Peter Watson in The Sunday Times, 4 Feb 73. Talking about "socially shared psychopathology" cases, he said: "Some of these have concerned literally masses of people, like the wave of slow poisonings that went on throughout Europe in the 17th century (when 100 people had to be burned or hanged before the epidemic died out)." If any of you more historically oriented people could help identify this "wave" we should be most glad.

As Fort showed clearly, cases of mass illness of unidentified causes are still a frequent happening, though the fashion in names has drifted from 'Mass Hysteria' to 'Socially Shared Psychopathology'. But from the phenomenological point of view they are still very real, and never much fun for the victims. One or many are suddenly afflicted -- experts are said to be tracking a 'mystery bug' or 'smell' down -- there is often a recurrence -- experts pronounce themselves baffled -- parents complain, victims groan -- then perhaps the greatest mystery of all, the

whole case drifts out of sight as smoothly as it called in the first place.

RICKMANSWORTH, HERTS.
A mystery sickness struck swimmers in a popular lake, and brought on a painful rash. Scientists from the Medical Research Council said there was no cause for alarm, hanging the blame on a microscopic parasite of snails "which may be responsible." But this was not confirmed, and if it was a parasite, surely its sudden nonmalevolence should have been equally a cause for wonder? Daily Mirror, 10 July 1970. Cr: Anthony Smith.

WARLEY, WORCS.
17 women workers collapsed and were taken to hospital from the Old Hill works of BSR Ltd. Experts who examined several theories ended up baffled -- oppressive heat, lack of ventilation, a 'mystery virus', and leakages of gas or other fumes were all checked for and discounted.

This is a doubly damned incident, because the previous Friday (4th), 25 women collapsed over a two hour period at the nearby Waterfall Lane premises of the same firm. Birmingham Evening Mail, 9 July 74. The next day, the Daily Mirror carried an interview with one of the victims, who complained of a strange ether-like smell sweeping through the factory. "I felt a burning sensation in my chest. My tongue felt all furry. I was dizzy and sick. All around me people were passing out." Factory inspectors, County Health officials and chemists poked around for a second day and still came up with nothing.

GILLESPIE, ILLINOIS.
84 people, most of them teenagers, were attacked by nausea, headaches and dizziness during a feature film in a movie-theatre on 28th December. Dr Lee Johnson, a trauma surgeon at St Francis hospital in nearby Litchfield, where 76 of the victims were taken, said that he didn't rule out the possibility of 'mass hysteria' -- whatever he means by that. Sheriff Richard Zarr feels differently: "It wasn't any kind of follow-the-leader type of thing. Seven or eight people were lying on the sidewalk in front of the show. These people were actually passed out. We were reviving them with oxygen." Those inside, he added, suddenly and without explanation began to feel ill during the film; they left the theatre and many began to collapse onto the sidewalk. The film showing was "Paper Moon", and whether or not you feel this explains things, one must feel that 'mass hysteria' as a form of critical protest would hardly be in keeping with the subject. Authorities were said to be investigating the ventilating system for 'foreign substances' etc -- but no sign of anything that would relieve the dicomfiture of the management, who would have been suffering alongside the wretches outside their establishment. Champaign-Urbana (Illinois) Courrier, 30 Dec 1973. Cr: Loren Coleman.

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS.
Not long after the above incident, we find 54 people, mostly children, collapsing during a Walt Disney double feature at the Riviera Theatre. They were vomiting and complaining of headaches and dizziness. Police were said to have identified the cause -- carbon monoxide leaking into the theatre. Perhaps we are being perverse, but we have seen (and you will too by the end of this section) many of these mystery illness cases, so that an immediate positive identification sticks out like a sore thumb -- we reserve our option to take it or leave it. San Francisco Examiner, 20 February 74. Credit: Loren Coleman.

BIRMINGHAM. KINGSTANDING,
"More than 20" guests at a wedding party were taken to hospital after "collapsing like flies and being sick all over the place." The reception had been at the Drake's Drum, with many of the guests praising the chicken meal provided. Then they returned to the bride's mother's house in Kingstanding, where they started to collapse. Both victims and venue received visits from officials of the Medical Officer's department, in a bid to find out how the business began. A curious detail comes to light: the first girl to collapse turned out to have appendicitis. Then the bride's grandmother, who was thought to have succumbed to the excitements and the heat in the house. Then the rest. Ah yes! The Medical Officers have come up with something -- The Drake's Drum was the site of a similar incident about 12 months previously, and they will look into that too. Prompted by this hint of a periodicity, we wrote to the proprietor of the pub, but we never received any reply. Par for the course. Birmingham Evening Mail, 18 July 72.

WILLENHALL, BIRMINGHAM.
The Moore family, with four kids, were all taken semi-conscious to Walsall General hospital, where a doctor declared the 'illness' to be caused by a lack of oxygen or carbon monoxide poisoning. Almost a Pavlovian response, we feel -- people faint, and nothing much can be found wrong with them, (a lightbulb springs into illumination overhead) and, its "Lack of oxygen, or carbon monoxide poisoning." Gas Board officials duly investigated, and, you get the gist by now, found nothing wrong in the house in which they collapsed.

Later, on 15 Dec., there was a repeat performance -- Keith Moore dropped to the kitchen floor. Then daughter Siobhan had convulsions and frothed at the mouth. Nothing is said about the other children except that they are recovering. Mrs Angela Moore managed to stagger to neighbours to call for help again. Nothing much is said either about what the police, health officials or the Gas Board, who investigated the first incident and found nothing suspicious. Sunday Mercury, 16 December 1973.

HAUPPAUGE, NEW YORK.
A 'mystery illness' killed two young sisters, and caused their father, mother and their five other children to move out of thier Long Island home. A next-door neighbour also moved out with his wife and child. Health officials, despite working the whole weekend on the case, failed to

link the two deaths to the use of Chlordane, a termite killer, on the two properties. "The fumes are still there and killing little birds. They just flop out of the air," said Mrs Frances Impastato, the dead girls' aunt. But we, while not claiming in any way to be wiser, but knowing as we do of 'mystery illness or attacks' on birds who then drop out of the sky, would prefer to say that 'something' was acting on these birds, rather than identifying the villainous fumes. A later report -- Commissioner of Health for Suffolk County said autopsies on the two girls have not shown any findings of the pesticide Chlordane, so far. Houston (Texas) Chronicle, 15 July 74. Miami (Florida) Herald, 16 July 74. Credit for both: Mark Hall.

Speaking of fumes, and the repeated searches for fumes in these cases, brings us onto our notes on smells and phantom smells, which as we have seen merge away with phantom illnesses.

PINXTON, DERBYSHIRE.
'Mysterious fumes' have driven a couple from their council house. The County Council have so far spent more than £1000 in various bids to identify the cause of the fumes which give Herbert Slater and his wife "burning sensations" in their throats every time they enter into their home in Church Street. The Council is trying to rehouse them. The Sun, 19 August 74.

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS.
We have a note on 15,000 people being evacuated from their homes in Chicago, many of them needing treatment for sore throats and eye trouble, after what is described as a "Five-mile long cloud of Acid fumes" hung over the city following a storage leak. It is possible that this is indeed the actual cause -- but we include the item because of its similarities in other respects to "Mystery Smell" cases. It is equally possible that the leaking storage tank was a convenient get-out for a mystery of colossal proportions -- 15,000 people is a lot of voters. Perhaps someone could look into this for us?. Note is from Sunday Mercury, 28 April 74.

WARLEY, BIRMINGHAM.
You could be forgiven for thinking by now that Birmingham must be the smelliest place on this Earth. The West Midlands Gas Board investigated complaints from 20 people, protesting about the smell of gas in the West Smethwick area of Warley. The Fire Brigade was also called to a similar complaint from a block of flats at Royal Oak, off Windmill Lane. Investigations of both incidents revealed no leaks, despite the smell. Express & Star, April 3, 1970. Cr: Anthony Smith.

HALESOWEN, STAFFS.
Yes, another town near Birmingham. This time health officials were investigating complaints from residents of the Quinton area who noticed a "sulphurous smell" between 3 and 4 am. David Isaacs, of 1 Oak Tree Crescent, said: "The smell brought tears to my eyes and I felt like vomiting." The officials describe it as a "cloud of gas" though of course, phenomenologically speaking, there was no evidence to suggest it was such, since all through our notes there have been suggestions of a "hysterical" (in the literal sense) and subjective aspect to these reactions. Anyway, despite police and health official attention, the cause and nature of the elusive 'cloud' avoided them completely. Birmingham Evening Mail, 4 October 1972.

NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE & WOLVERHAMPTON.
I heard the story on the radio -- that 63 nursery school kids were taken to hospital after supposedly eating seeds from a laburnum tree in the playground. I had doubts. 63 is a big bunch of kids to be all copying each other -- and surely the tree's presence would have posed a similar problem in previous years, enough to have had it removed. If this was the first seed-eating mania it would in itself be a curiosity. The paper the next day carried the story , but surprise surprise. Also a note that Wolverhampton Corp. was having branches removed from a laburnum tree in an infants school playground after 21 kids had taken ill through eating berries from the tree. Same tree, same type of victims, similar sites, same day -- Hmmmm. Birmingham Post, 21 July 72.

HAZELRIGG, NORTHUMBERLAND.
150 children, aged between 9 and 14 spent the weekend in hospital after a mass collapse at the Hazelrigg carnival site. Police and hospital scientists took away samples of ice cream and other foods for testing. Also a piece of turf after it was suggested that this might be the result of a spraying of the area with insecticide over 24 hours earlier. No results of the testings was ever printed in the national papers that I monitored subsequently. Daily Mirror, 10 July 72.

Now we are into a whole sub-category -- mystery illnesses in schools, and at risk of great trauma to myself I reach back into my files, or more accurately, down the back of the draw, where it fell over three years ago -- a note on a saga from 1965. Its a good excuse to fish it out, finally.

BLACKBURN, LANCS., & PORTSMOUTH, HANTS.
St Hilda's Church of England Secondary Modern School is the scene -- 90 girls, the victims. They were taken to Park Lee Isolation hospital after complaining (on the 7th) of dizziness, pains in the chest, and some of their number losing consciousness. Blackburn Medical Officer, Dr John Ardley steps in to conduct tests.

On the 11th, St Hilda's reopens -- and within minutes 63 girls collapse and are taken to the same hospital. Dr John Moss, Consultant Paediatrician to the Blackburn Group of Hospitals, said: "This is not a new outbreak but a continuation of the same one. I believe this is a type of encephalitis of virus origin. This virus causes inflammation of the central nervous system. I do not think it is going to spread from one sufferer to another. There is no evidence of where it originated. The patients tend to be well for

periods of hours and then ill again and it is difficult to say how many are completely well." In other words a mystery illness. He added that nearly all the girls affected in the second incident were ill in the previous attack, but were not as seriously affected as those in the second attack for the first time -- if you follow?

At the same time as the second wave hit St Hilda's we learn (in the same report) that much the same sort of thing happened at St Luke's C of E Modern School, Portsmouth, where 70 girls were taken ill the previous week, and then again (11th) when 30 were "seized with giddiness and sickness". Both items from Birmingham Evening Mail, but 8 & 12 October 1965, recpectively.

The next day (12th) there were 118 girls absent from St Luke's, Portsmouth. A member of staff said there had been one or two recurrences. And at St Hilda's, Blackburn, only one more girl had collapsed. Experts in both investigations seem to have become less vociferous about their lack of progress in identifying the causes. Birmingham Evening Mail, 13 October 1965. See also NEWS 1/17 for other 'mystery illnesses' in Portsmouth.

BOURNEMOUTH, HANTS, & A CASE IN SUSSEX.
A 'mystery bug' shut down one of Britain's top private girl's schools for a fortnight. 15 girls were laid low by a 'feverish illness', and the medical officer of Wentworth Milton Mount School decided to take no chances until the 'bug' was identified, and various tests were in progress. Dr Barry Windsor said that until the results of these were known, he could not say if it was the same illness that caused a boy's death at Lancing College, Sussex, and a few others to be sent home. Daily Express, 3 October 1973.

WORKINGTON, CUMBERLAND.
Worried parents have threatened to keep their children away from Harrington infants school, after a foul and elusive smell has caused much illness among the 126 kids. No figures are given but they were said to have suffered with headaches and sickness. Heating systems, drains etc checked, experts prod and poke and test -- result: bafflement. The Sun, 22 February 73.

SELBY, YORKSHIRE, AND OTHERS IN THE AREA.
For the eighth consecutive year, pupils of Cliffe School, near Selby, have been hit by severe stomach pains and sickness, this time 77 were claimed. The headmaster, Mr Edward Wright, said: "I have seen children collapse in the school porch with violent pains. It strikes very quickly and always at this time of the year. The first outbreak was eight years ago and most of the children were affected. It lasted about six weeks and children were away from school between two and four days. But we have had the same problem every year since. Now children are off for only a day and I think we are becoming immune."

Because the illness is so short lived, he continued, it is often not reported, and so he found it difficult to persuade authorities to investigate. He started making inquiries himself and found the Hemmingborough and Riccall primary schools 1½ miles away had also been affected. The headmaster at Riccall said: "It's happened every year for the four years I have been here, and my family have also had it. About 12 pupils have had the symptoms in the last few weeks."

Mr Wright took the matter to the new district community physician (after recent local government reorganisation), a Dr Wilson MacIntosh, who said: "It is difficult to theorise on possible causes. General hygiene, the water and this type of thing, will have to be checked - but it is doubtful whether this is responsible. Often there is no simple answer to something like this." Mr Wright tends towards thinking the crop-spraying in the area might be a contributing factor, but the National Farmer's Union have hotly denied responsibility, claiming only to use sprays listed by the Ministry of Agriculture as harmless to humans. Ahh! but there have been mistakes in the past, you cry! So why is the 'mystery illness' confined to so few country schools in the area.....or town schools and factories, for that matter? We still don't know the full extent of ecological effects and repercussions from the widespread use of hundreds of types of chemicals on the land. This is only one direction that occurs to us for investigation, but before we go onto another, we'd better add that the above story was from the Daily Express, 26 May 74. Credit: Peter Rogerson.

FILEY, YORKSHIRE.
Apart from being in the same county and happening at roughly the same time, there could be no connexion at all between this and the previous case. Kitt Waggitt and his wife have lived in their council house for 20 years, but the smell only started in earnest about two years ago making people giddy and breathless, and bringing tears to their eyes. In those two years Kitt and the Council have tried "everything" they could think of, digging up drains, rebuilding flues and fireplaces, checking the foundations, etc. "I have spent £150 installing extractor fans, air vents, and a special air-purifying machine."..but all to no effect. Even a £20 reward to a bright chemist, failed. All adding up to a big zilch, as Kojak would say. In desperation, Kitt turns to the outside chance thousands before him, and no doubt thousands more after him, will turn to when Science has failed to rid them of their daily discomfort -- an exorcism. (Gasp!) Yes, sooner or later we come up against these remnants (or are they foretastes?) of a psychic technology.

You cannot have failed to note the phantom smell aspect of the mystery illness cases having a distant cousin in the smells sometimes associated with hauntings or psychic activity of sorts -- there may or may not be such a connexion. We have no note subsequent to the above (Sunday Express, 7 April 74. Cr: Peter Rogerson.) as to any success in the operation -- though a brief note in The Sun, 23 April 74, merely said the Waggitts had had advice from all over the world on how to quell their smell.

Continued on p14.

NOTES ON LINCOLNSHIRE PHENOMENA: 2.

by NIGEL WATSON

To begin with, it must be pointed out that this article is in no-way at all complete. My intention has been to record several 'cases' that might in a general sense be classified as 'hauntings' and are in the main previously unpublished in the literature; the main exception being the haunting of the Rectory at Epworth.

The reports are restricted to the South Humberside and Lincolnshire regions recorded on Ordnance Survey sheet 112 in the 1:50000 First Series. Map references are given with the notes.

As I have said, this compilation is merely to bridge a gap in the available literature. The giant mass of excluded material on Lincs and S Humberside (1) can be found in the following: Lincolnshire Life; Lincolnshire Folklore by Ethel Rudkin; County Folklore Volume V by Mrs Gutch and Mabel Peacock; Journal of Paraphysics; and, of course, The News; etc.

Eventually I should like to compile a complete (well, as complete as possible!) catalogue of this material, to give a comprehensive view of the whole of Lincolnshire (and S Humberside.)

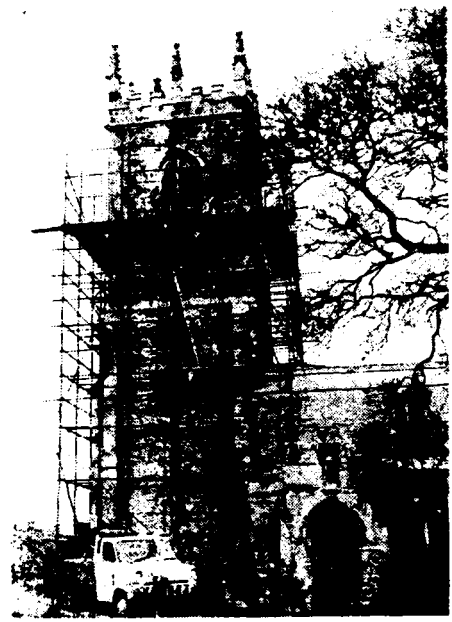
LAUGHTON CHURCH Map Ref: SK 849 974.

"Eerie footsteps on a circular stone stairway in the ancient tower of a country church have startled workmen and set villagers tongues wagging. The strange events have happened in a church popular with Canadian and US visitors for the quality of brass rubbings obtained from a family tomb. They led to one of the workmen repairing the tower declining for a few days to be alone in the church.

"Work began some weeks ago on repairs estimated to cost about £2,000 to All Saints Church at Laughton, about eight miles from Scunthorpe. The church tower, part of which is said to date from the Eleventh Century, needed cracks filling and its external surface touching up. Earlier, an elderberry tree had been discovered growing out of the tower after an adjacent tree had been felled. Some time after the work began, the two men on the job started hearing mysterious footsteps on the tower stairway. Not just one or two, but a whole series of footsteps.

"One of the men, Jeffrey Curtis, 18, heard the footsteps on two occasions. "It was as if somebody was coming up the tower but there was nobody there," he said. "I was a bit shaken at first, and did not want to be alone in the church for a few days after." His stepfather, Mr Kenneth Curtis, of 64 Butterwick Rd, Messingham, also heard the footsteps on different occasions. Indeed, at one time he called out, thinking they had been made by some electricians working in the church. But they had left earlier and there was nobody there.

"Mr Curtis does not believe in ghosts yet says he cannot offer an explanation for the happenings. One man who does is Mr Roy Chappel, of Aspen Garth, Laughton. Some 25 years ago he was in the church one night as chairs were being changed for a whist drive. Hearing what he believed was somebody in the church, he called out that he had got the last of the chairs. But there was no reply, and on investigation, nobody in the church. Startled at first, he has since reasoned that the noises he heard were an echo. He has never heard of a Laughton ghost. Opinions about the strange noises are likely to continue to differ, and it is hardly likely they will ever be resolved."



This account has been edited from the Scunthorpe Evening Telegraph, 15 April 1974. I heard about these happenings the day before they were published in the local paper, from a relative of one of the men. He claimed that one of them had been in the tower on his own when he felt a hand tap him on the shoulder, and looking round he found that there was nobody else at all in the church tower.

EPWORTH RECTORY.

Most standard works on psychical research carry reports of the famous ghost of 'Old Jeffrey' who haunted the Wesley family during the winter of 1715-16.

The main activities of the manifestation were carried out in the large room at the very top of the Old Rectory, which has been known as 'Old Jeffrey's Chamber' ever since. John Wesley wrote up all the information he could find, publishing it in the Arminian Magazine of 1784.

A helpful little booklet is: "Epworth - The Home of the Wesleys." by W Le Cato Edwards.

I visited the Rectory in April 74 - an interesting place to look around, even if it has been practically rebuilt. I never met Old Jeffrey either!

IRONSTONE COTTAGE. Map Ref: SE 892 108.

This building is attached to the Scunthorpe Borough Museum & Art Gallery, Oswald Road, Scunthorpe. It is reputed to be haunted, but no firm information is known.

CEMETERY ROAD (SCUNTHORPE). Map Ref: SE 898 097.

Cemetery Road is where a young man is alleged to have seen a weird phenomenon. He cycled up East Common Road, turning left into Cemetery Road, where he saw a vertical white cylindrical light cross the road from left to right. He did not go to work the next day because the event had disturbed him so much.

MESSINGHAM.

In 1971, I was, for a short time, in contact with Alan Beasty, who then lived in Scunthorpe. In a letter dated 25 November 1971, he reported an incident of some interest, which I quote:

"A friend of mine, Mr Cliff Todd of Wendover Estate, Messingham, encountered an unfamiliar event on Monday morning (2am). He told me that he was in bed, but awake, when his bedroom was bathed in a flash of intense white light, lasting for about 2 to 3 seconds. This was followed by a repeat performance at about 2.30am; this time the light lasted for roughly 4 to 5 seconds. Since I cannot get a satisfactory account of the weather situation at that particular time of day, I cannot rule out lightning. Mr Todd stated that the light was so intense and profound that daylight did not or would not compare in magnitude of illumination."

In the letter he added that the light was not associated with any sound or noise. In a further letter dated 9 December 71 he gave more information:

"Regarding C Todd's incident: His bedroom curtains were drawn; the curtains are of thick material and are lined. So the strength of the light would have had to have been sufficient to penetrate and illuminate to the unusual degree previously stated. The date (of the incident) was 22 November 1971."

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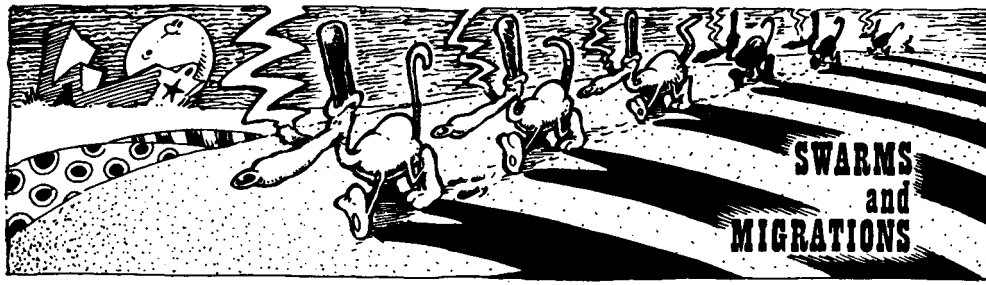
Note:
1) Before local government reorganisation came into being on 1st April 1974, South Humberside was a part of Lincolnshire. -- NW.

SMELLS.....cont:

As an example, we'll just use the following (which fell out of a folder we were moving). It is from a piece in the Daily Mail, 26 Nov 73, about Canon Henry Cooper's appointment as diocesan adviser on exorcism to the Bishop of London. He refers to an exorcism of a staff flat "at a famous London landmark" which he had promised not to identify. In the bedroom was a pervading and loathsome smell of decay which no amount of cleaning could remove, and some other manifestations of hauntings. After exorcism, he claimed, the smell, whisperings, etc disappeared forever.

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA.
Fire officials were said to be puzzled over unidentified noxious fumes that filled two floors of a downtown clothing store on 3 Sept 74, sending 28 people to hospital. Eight were overcome and found unconscious - others complained they were dizzy and nauseous -- and three firemen without their masks were also affected. None were in a serious condition and were released within hours. "We don't know what kind of gas it was or where it came from," said a Fire Department spokesman. St Paul (Minnesota) Dispatch, 4 Sept 74. Credit: Mark Hall. Our datum is a collapsing or overcoming of people, and a subsequent investigation based on the assumption of 'fumes' or 'mystery bugs'. As JC Pearce points out, Nature may abhor a vacuum, but Man abhors an empty category as much if not more.

Our thought is, that whatever the mystery smell/illness phenomenon is, its evidences are widely scattered in the different branches of human experience. Perhaps this is our task - the beginnings of cross-indexing the flora and fauna of phenomenology - as Fort correlated the annals of earthquakes and meteors, previously kept apart by specialists, to discover or open up a new path of inquiry. Smells, fainting fits and ghosts. What do we mean by 'auto-suggestion'; 'Mass Hysteria'; 'psychosomatic' ? We wont know unless we try to puzzle these things onto their next stage.



Daily Mirror, 2 Sept 74. In pure gothic hysteria Colonel Ethelwald Vella, assistant professor of pathology of the Royal Army Medical College, has warned us what to expect if Britain goes ahead with the Channel tunnel project -- swarms of rabies infested bats. Hah! He should see our 'Surrey Puma' file, and the notes of Fort-only-knows-whats that regularly stomp and flap in this glorified safari park of ours. And then there are the swarms and migrations of things...

ANTS:

Westfield Estate, Farnborough, Hants. (Puma country.) Residents complained to their local council that they were being invaded by inch-long ants, coloured red and black. Mrs Coralie Quaintance said: "You can hear them hissing. Its spine-chilling. They climb straight up the walls of the house and get in anywhere." Mr Richard Arthur, of Snowdon Close said he had seen ants marching in columns 50 yards long, and heard the sound of their feet as they tramped by. Mrs Christine Gill remembered: "Looking across the garden fence and seeing a dark patch. When I looked closer I realised what it was - a seething black mass of these giant ants." The council has advised the residents to sit it out, after identifying the little fellers as Formica Rufa, a rare pest-eating wood ant: "People expect us to go around killing everything they regard as creepy-crawlies, and we won't. As a basic principle, if an insect is useful we won't kill it, unless it becomes a terrible nuisance." In Germany these ants are protected by law, and Italians are encouraged to breed them (it says here). The British Museum commented: "The people on the estate should be grateful they have such fascinating creatures living so near." Daily Express and Daily Mail for 30 Sept 74. Cr: Steve Moore.

Millions of flying white ants have forced police to quit their station at Darlinghurst, Sydney, Australia. London Evening News, 11 Nov 74. Credit: Steve Moore.

A plague of crazy ants has over-run the island of Mahe in the Seychelles, and has so worried the islanders that they are to be given £30,000 over the next two and a half years to be spent on keeping the terror within bounds. The Anoplolepis longipes is small, red and doesn't bite or sting -- but they swarm, and keep on swarming. They are attracted by moisture, and so head in droves for wet areas. "They collect in large numbers, running up and down trees and all over people. Livestock suffers. Chickens just sit there and mope. Other insects clear out of an area when the ants move in," said Tecwin Jones, deputy director of the Centre for Overseas Pest Research. They run up and down trouser-legs in droves, cluster round the eyes and ears -- some animals and small children have reported to have simply died of shock when they were over-run. It is thought that the ant, not a native of the island, was brought by ship from elsewhere only a few years previously. It is difficult to wipe out because they can lay their eggs in leaves as well as anthills, and they have grown so fast they now dominate four different isolated areas of the small island. Sunday Times, 3 November 74.

WINGED THINGS.

The council of Cizre, Turkey, is paying £8 a lb. to any citizen during a plague of flies there. Sunday People, 10 November 74.

In 1967, most likely in the summer months, a swarm of crickets invaded the village of Stretham in Cambridgeshire. Sixty, live and chirping, were caught in one house alone. Ely council were said to be fighting back with insecticides. Alas, we have no complete date for this - perhaps someone could check with Ely council for us. Credit: Steve Moore.

Recently, Redding, in Northern California, also suffered a swarms of crickets. The police admitted that, despite many calls from houses in outlying districts, the chirping critters were crawling in through every available crack and aperture & there was nothing they could do - they were under attack too. An increase in the cricket population happens about once in every ten years, according to State Department of Fish & Game entomologist Ron Hawthorne, who also advised getting rid of the things quickly should they enter a house, because when they run out of normal food they start on clothes, curtains and other houshold fibres. San Francisco Chronicle, 25 July 74. Credit: Loren Coleman.

From our book of the moment, THE WORLD OF WONDERS mentioned more fully elsewhere this ish, comes a tale of striking plagues of flies, or rather, gnats, from way back. Fort, you may remember, decided to begin his searches for data at the year 1800, and so vast stretches of the past

remain untapped of Fortean phenomena. Anyway, this item is quoted on p62 of WONDERS from a pamphlet inscribed "Printed for BB, London, in 1622 " No title is given but the pamphlet is said to be in the British Museum, King's collection.

> "In the twelth year of the reign of Richard II, a battle was fought between gnats at Shene, now called Richmond: their multitudes were so great, that the air was darkened with them. It was computed that two thirds of them were killed and the remaining third suddenly vanished."

We make the date of the event out to be 1389.

MARINE SWARMS.

Hundreds of giant freshwater mussels have been found in a lake at Loscoe, Derbyshire. This seems to have been a remarkable enough event to have been worth declaring by local specialists. Sunday Mirror, 1 July 73.

Thousands of 'Sea Mice' have been washed ashore on the south coast around Southsea, Hants. The mice - 5" long sea worms with grey fur-like backs (and said by one report to give off "flashing lights") - are harmless and rarely seen. Daily Express & The Sun, 19 Feb 74.

'Millions' of giant spiny crabs are invading the coastal waters off Bognor Regis, Worthing and Shoreham, some of them more than a foot across, ripping nets and blocking up lobster pots. Many fishermen are up in arms, complaining that their livelyhoods have been severely jeopardised. Mr Albie Ide, Bognor's 80-year-old fisheries officer, said: "These crabs have made net fishing impossible. I picked 500 of the blighters out of two nets yesterday. They are covered with sharp spines like razors and they can cut a net to ribbons in a few minutes. With nets costing £30 a time we just can't go on fishing with them." Mr Edmund Venables, curator of Bognor museum, said "We have had many invasions of spider crabs but nothing like the present one." Various theories have been suggested: that they are attracted by the huge outfall sewer completed two years ago; or the large amount of their favourite seaweed in the area. We have no further reports of any developments in this struggle. Sunday Express, 14 July 74. Credit: Steve Moore.

You may remember a note back in NEWS 2/14 about the explosive growth of the Sargasso-type seaweed around Portsmouth. Well it seems it's still on the plant equivalent of a rampage -- and "scientists" (it doesn't say who or from where) are urging the government to make control of the menace a national problem, and they want them to sponsor a £10,000, 3-year study on ways of stopping the weed. Daily Mail, 16 Dec 74.

RODENT RAMPAGES.

Thousands of tiny field-mice invaded 250 acres of sugar beet on ten seperate Worcestershire and Shropshire farms. In what the Ministry of Agriculture said to be calling "the year of the mouse", hoardes of 'brainy' rodents are outwitting the farmers. After extensive damage on earlier forays, the Ministry's only recommendation was that the farms use a special 'Cambridge Roller', which flattens out the telltale lumps on the ground after seed sowing. "We know of instances where 500 freshly planted seeds have disappeared overnight," said Dr Andrew Dunning, head of reseasch at Brooms Barn Research Farm, Bury St Edmunds. "Really its something of a mystery. The mice appear to be able to findthe seeds by looking at the state of the surface of the field." Hence the advice to roll flat. But still the seeds vanished. Much puzzlement of experts. Mr George Field, a joint tennant of Sutton House Farm, near Tenbury Wells, Worcs, said even after redrilling and laying poison in land-tiles, the mice came back. "This has been astonishing. It will cost us nearly £2,000," he said. A heretical thought comes to us -- no mention of people seeing mice, only that mice are blamed when seeds disappear. We have notes on mysterious patches of crops that spring up where no one (to anyone's knowledge) has sowed any seeds - as though there has been a teleporting of seed to that patch from elsewhere. So we are always on the lookout for the vanishings of seeds. When seeds vanish, it's natural, in their frame of reference, for farmers to blame mice - but whether in this case the mice were there or not can only be discovered by further work by someone. Sunday Mercury, 26 May 74.

A datum which weights our problem of putting the above in this section or 'Disappearances' or 'Falls'-- is a note in the Daily Mirror, 11 March 74, that a plague of mice has caused a shortage of mousetraps in Evesham, Worcestershire.

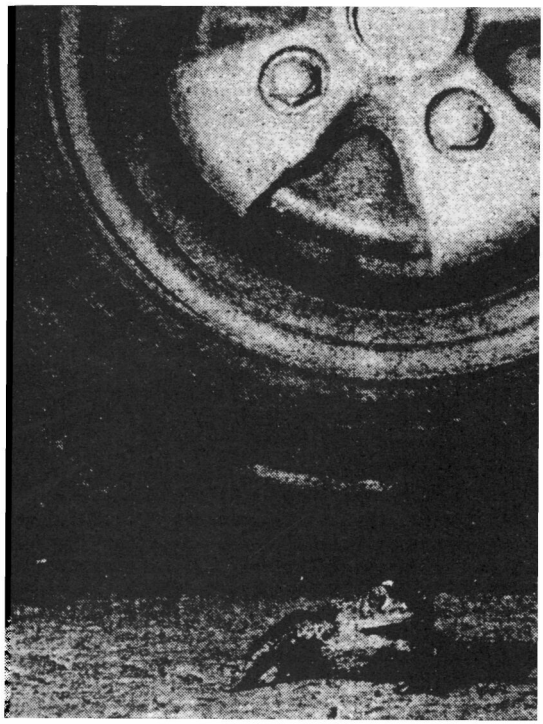
Thousands of field-mice and rats, this time in the fields around Villers-sous-Bereid, Verdun, France, where they polished off 500 acres of grain and other crops between them. The Mayor has declared the community a disaster zone at the request of the regional authorities. One theory is that the lack of anti-rat campaigns in recent years and the killing of so many foxes (natural enemy of rodents) for fear of rabies, has allowed them to multiply heavily. Sacramento (California) Bee, 1 August 74. Credit: Loren Coleman.

Nor has Australia been free. Mice were over-running Kalgoorlie, a mining town in Western Australia, said to be driven out of the plains by bush fires. They are running amok in beds and baths and a resident is said to have found one in his beer. That for an Ozzy is the last straw. The town was pleaing for shipments of traps. The Sun, 30 Dec 74.

At Cairo airport, police fought a pitched battle with 45,000 desert rats, which had moved into seven airliners and eaten everything indide them. Sunday People, 10 November 74. The 'Year of the Mouse', indeed!

TOADS.

Last March, if you had chanced down Pix Farm Lane, Hemel Hempstead in Hertfordshire, you would have heard sounds of excitement, hoarse croaking, the honking of horns, and the odd squelch. "Thousands" of toads, from literally miles around, were making



. . . a lucky toad escapes by inches to love another night

their way back to a lake at Bourne End. "We don't really know where they all come from, but toads always return to their birthplace to mate," said Miss Priscilla Oates, who organised a 15-strong toad-crossing patrol. "But we think some of them come for miles, and many have to cross the lane. We scoop them up and carry them across the road in a bucket, and put them safe and sound on the other side." From the wording it seems at least that they worked every night from March to May the previous year, though nothing is said about previous events. We shall watch for a recurrence this year. Daily Mirror, 27 March 74. Daily Express, 29 March 74. And photo from Sunday Mirror, 31 March 74.

DEVONIAN PORCUPINES.

Here is an example of our dilemmas of category. Porcupines are discovered, breeding in Devon -- now do we stick this under 'Appearances', 'Animal Curiosities', or what? To get it in this issue we have lumped it under 'Swarms'. After all, a population of 30 (estimated) where none should be in the first place is an explosion of sorts. And if the animal is turning up where it is least expected...well that's a migration, of sorts, too. Dammit, why do I feel I have to justify this whole business of categories? Is there still a subversive streak of orderliness in me that has resisted punishment by editorial trials? As an aberration it has its uses, but we are constantly feeling that soon it should be left behind on our travels. Now I admit to something else - a fit of sloth which I intend to enjoy to the full, refraining from precis-ing (?) the following write-up by Rosemarie Wittman on the prickly problems of the porcupines in Devon, from the Sunday Times, 22 July 73:

New English wildlife

AN EXOTIC and new hazard for tourists, growing trees and anyone taking a casual nature walk down in the woods has appeared near Okehampton in leafy Devon. The name of the hazard is *hystriz cristata*, less formally known as the crested porcupine. Two porcupines escaped from a local wild-life park, the Pine Valley Zoo, about three years ago, successfully survived the winter and began to breed.

Although the species is from India they are very adaptable and are found in conditions ranging from arid desert to temperate climate. Down in Devon they are adapting to a British way of life and loving it. They live on tubers, roots and fruit (they adore bluebell bulbs) and hide in the undergrowth. New plantations of trees are ideal as the undergrowth is thick and provides good cover.

Unfortunately porcupines have some rather nasty un-British habits. They strip the bark from young conifers, thereby killing them. The Forestry Commission is therefore rather anxious to catch them before they breed further and decimate their plantations. But *hystriz cristata* is not that easy to catch. An anti-social, shy animal, he can get very prickly indeed when pursued. Fully grown he weighs about 60lb and is more than two feet long.

That makes him the largest terrestrial rodent in Europe—but outside Devon he is actually only found much further south, in Spain, Italy, Greece and Turkey. The Indian variety, alas, is not the most attractive of porcupines. He has a hairy nose, and none of the poodle-like glamour of the furry North American type, which also climbs trees. He is also notoriously short-tempered, even by porcupine standards.

If discovered he will not curl comfortably up into a ball, like his British cousin, the hedgehog. He will look you straight in the eye, and then just as the enemy is disarmed and perhaps takes a step closer, he will turn round, go sharply into reverse gear and prong you with 7-inch quills from his tail. These quills are like small poisoned arrows, since they go in deep, are very hard to get out, and due to the unsavoury living conditions of porcupines, are covered in filth and dirt. Septicaemia is the mildest result that can occur out of such an encounter.

Already an unsuspecting badger digger, who thought he found a badger hole and put his small terrier dog down to ferret it out, was shocked to find his dog retreating rapidly out of the hole with porcupine quills stuck in its chest. The dog later died of a pierced lung.

Estimates about the number of porcupines ranges from two, by a local naturalist, to 30, by the Ministry of Agriculture who calculated that at the rate of two to three litters a year with two to three young each time they could have reached this number in three years.

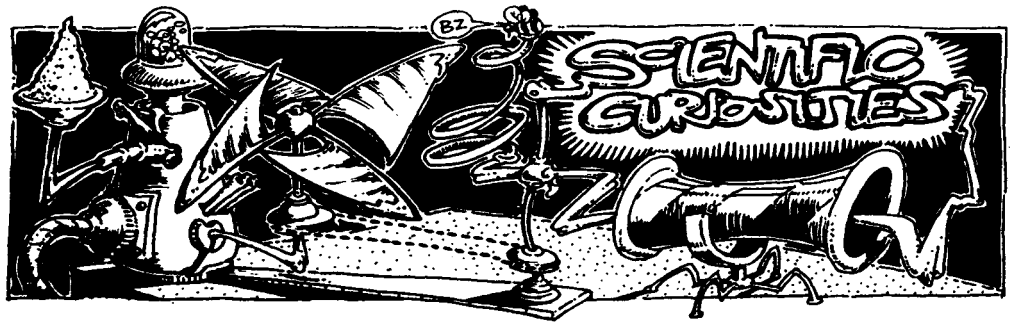
Apart from creating headaches for the Forestry Commission, and dangers for people roaming the woods, the porcupines have also been a bit of a shock to local wildlife. Mrs Ruth Murray, a Devon naturalist, is worried about the effects of this foreign invasion on British born badgers.

"These porcupines have really upset the ecological balance. I feel very strongly about it. They come in and take over the badger burrows for a short while, and then move into another burrow. The badger is up against a species he cannot possibly compete with. I mean, nothing is going to get the best of a porcupine at close quarters is it? The badgers are moving out of the area altogether, they are giving up. Once a porcupine has occupied his burrow no badger would want to come back."

Mrs Murray has been asked by the Universities Federation for Animal Welfare to try and trap the porcupines and is at the moment setting baits for them, mostly bananas and other fruit. Her job has been made more difficult by local publicity about the porcupines and she hopes people will keep out of the woods and let her get on with it.

She also believes more control should be exercised over wild-life parks: "Anyone can set up a wild-life park with lots of exotic animals, but if they are able to escape it's not fair to the animal from the park and it's not fair on our own wild life. Nature is delicately balanced, and can be easily upset by escapes of this kind."

We are attempting to get more information on the state of the situation now - but for the moment note that the porcupines are still turning up, as Ministry scientists say they caught one in "Devon woodland" on 2nd Jan 74. Unfortunately there is nothing in the report to say which Ministry, or where in Devon. Daily Mirror, 4 Jan 74. Credit: DJ McAllister.



MAGNETIC ANOMALY IS GROWING.

John De Laurier, an earth-physicist at the Canadian Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, is continuing his investigations into what is called Canada's "deepest mystery" - an eccentric wave in the planetary magnetic field, "and as far as I am concerned, its the biggest anomaly in the world." It seems that this enigma was first noticed in 1957 at the isolated settlement of Alert, in the Canadian Arctic, and at each successive yearly charting its size has spread. Something that could be as much as 18 miles down is causing magnetometers to give higher than normal readings - and it covers an area about 43 miles wide on a 450 mile long path beneath Alert and Eureka -- and De Laurier will attempt to determine whether it stretches all the way to the western Arctic regions.

De Laurier said: "There are other such anomaly features around the world - such as down the Rocky Mountains in the United States; in fact, wherever there are recognized earthquake zones. But ours is enormous and could be larger than any of them." One theory, he added, was that a build-up in magnetic forces comes where the plates upon which the continents are built, rub together. "But that doesn't explain our anomaly.. Its not on an earthquake zone - the Arctic doesn't have earthquakes. It's very stable...So far we can't find an explanation for it. It's a total mystery."

De Laurier also said that he knew his findings were being used to "illustrate some pretty odd ideas," (as David Quintner reports in the Toronto (Ontario) Star, 20 March 74. Credit: Mark Hall); and Brad Steiger has written up De Laurier's researches in ATLANTIS RISING (which I don't think we have seen in the UK) in connexion with theories of the existence of an 'elder race' existing beneath the earth, and who regularly interfere with surface life, causing disasters. Indeed, I'm surprised at no mention of such juicy 'evidence' in Brinsley Le Poer Trench's recent book on the same subject (see NEWS 7, Reviews) THE SECRET OF THE AGES.

A SIGN OF THE TIMES.

Without so much as a ripple in the national press or 'craft' magazines, an event has passed which may or may not have some significance to someone's cosmology. This nexus occurred on 15 July 74 - when the Soviet Union launched another satellite in the 'Cosmos' series -- its number was 666. Further details in Novosti Bulletin 15179, 15 July.

PRECESSION OF THE DAMNED.

Anti-Gravity - along with perpetual motion and squaring the circle has an immortal fascination - not just for cranks, but for all of us, for the dream of controlled levitation and the archetype of a magical, ecstatic flight is a powerful force in the soul of man. In the last 3-4 months, a series of demonstrations culminating in a lecture to the Royal Institution on the night of Friday 8 Nov 74, were given by Professor Eric Laithwaite of a device hailed by the press as an Antigravity Machine. He placed the device on a set of kitchen scales, where it weighed 20lbs, switched it on and the registered weight dropped to 15 pounds. Many were impressed; vide Chapman Pincher, who in the Daily Express next day (9 Nov. Cr: Michael Start.) wrote of the successful event "which will reverberate throughout the laboratories and Think Tanks of the world with a welter of argument over the coming weeks."

I did not hear of all this till much later. Prof. Laithwaite had, in fact been on ITV's 'News at Ten' on the night of the 7th Nov. I searched all the papers (except the Express, Fort help me!) and found nothing. I wrote to the Professor on behalf of the NEWS, and a few weeks later, back came a circular reply (he had had hundreds of inquiries and could not answer them all personally) saying that the full text of the RI talk would appear, with maths, in a forthcoming Proceedings of the Royal Institution, and he was giving the 'Christmas Lectures to Children' on TV and would cover the principles of the device in a talk on gyroscopes on the evening of 1 Jan 75.

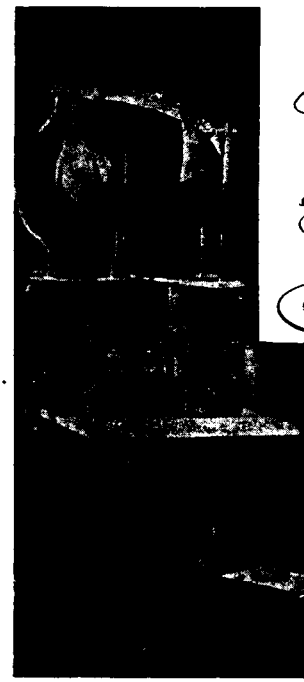
The New Scientist of 14 Nov 74, had a piece on the RI demonstration, headed "Eric Laithwaite Defies Newton." by Robert Walgate, which, if you'll forgive the outburst, is classic of snide put-down. He said that Laithwaite claimed to have "violated gravity"; simply not true; and Laithwaite being a sound, cautious and experienced man, as well as that rare thing, a scientist

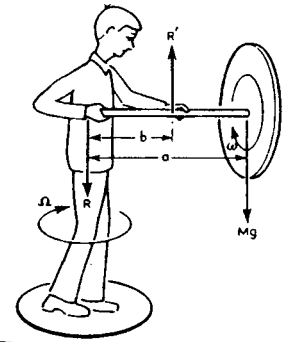
with some imagination, has denied categorically any such statement or intimation; saying, in the circular, that "A precessing gyroscope does not produce a new force, but rather it produces absence of a force where one might be expected, and that this is thought to be due entirely to the presence of rate of change of acceleration." Nonetheless, the establishment, or at least the professional journals, seem to have closed ranks, as Pincher's 'reverberation' faded into a well-damped squeak. Maybe I haven't looked hard enough.

The children's lectures were conducted with a candour and excited spirit of open curiosity that should be a model to theoretical scientists everywhere. Laithwaite admitted that his models were still early experiments and that, quite frankly, he didn't understand what was going on in them. That was precisely what interested him as an engineer and scientist. "Newton is not wrong," he said. But these experiments showed that his laws were "restricted to events where there is no change in angular momentum - just as Ohms Law applies only to DC and not AC current."

Some reaction for and against will be found in the New Scientist for 28 Nov; 19 Dec, 74 and 9 Jan 75, in the letter section, and a further item by Walgate in the 9 Jan issue, to which I'll return. I just have to quote an outraged physicist from the University of Bristol (NS.9 Jan) who thought that the RI had "damaged its reputation as a source of science education for young people. Victorian party tricks involving gyroscopes are certainly entertaining and make good television. But the phenomena must be explained. In this respect the lectures were very bad..." But as I understood it, Laithwaite's point was that with these devices something peculiar was happening that we had no complete explanation for, yet -- so asking him to explain, was to ask him to prejudge the results of experiment. Similarly others have said the gyro has been around for some time, and that cranks always trot it out -- again Laithwaite gave the impression that he had examined even the crank solutions, had discounted many, and was now following up a genuine effect.

For discussions of the technical aspects, please see the items referred to. In context, presentation and attendant questions, I was reminded (as was one of the NS correspondents) of John W Campbell's efforts on behalf of Norman L Dean's 'reactionless' thrust device in 1960. Campbell firstly identified the problem as an emotional one, putting the finger squarely on the main failing of orthodoxy in science. "It is essentially unimportant whether or not Dean's device works. It is important that it was not investigated... The absolute incompetance of our method of detecting important break-through discoveries is thoroughly demonstrated." (1). Let us hope that this sad indictment is not still true 14 years later, and that Professor Laithwaite will continue his voyage of discovery. Ariadne, writing in NS, 28 Nov 74, mentions yet another demonstration of what sounds like a similar device by Professor A di Bella of the University of Genoa, at a symposium on Naval Hydrodynamics in Rome in 1968. It seems strange that the usual response is that if there was 'something in it' the scientists would have investigated it long ago - much the same as the response to a simple invention 'If it is so good, why hasn't anyone done it before?' Indeed they seem to be both sides of a rather negative attitude, and much depends on the expectancy of the question and answer process of inquiry. Laithwaite thinks that people have failed in their analysis of gyros in the past because they were looking for a new force, and he identifies the problem to be an absence of a force.





The photo of Laithwaite's device (left) is from NS 14 Nov 74. And the figure above accompanies Walgate's second piece in NS 9 Jan 75, in which he attempts to analyse one of Laithwaite's experiments, though I'm sure that in the test the boy held both hands on the end of the pole with his arms outstretched.

Walgate (and one of the correspondents) championed the inertia of the establishment by critisising Laithwaite for "changing fields too quickly and jumping to conclusions." And again Laithwaite pre-empted the critics by making a nice point that as an engineer he deals primarily with observations of (and with) phenomena that work. It's as a scientist, not as an engineer, that he expresses his puzzlement over how. But I fear this is too subtle for some -- the fact is that many 'scientists' were annoyed that Laithwaite was planting beans in someone else's patch, and in doing so, exposed an area of embarrassment. It seems that even something so apparently simple as motion still has secrets to offer us. (Many thanks to Frank Adey, who pointed out a very interesting paradox of relative mass/motion in Arthur Koestler's 'THE ROOTS OF COINCIDENCE', (p136 et seq.) in the Picador paper edition -- alas we have no room to use it -- but this also questions (indirectly) our concept of gravity.)

But we must admit that Laithwaite did give them some ammunition. OK, so some of his demonstrations did go wrong, but this was so obviously a result of him trying to pack so much in so short a time; jockeying for best camera angle etc etc. I think we can fairly ignore this, because he would not be where he is if he was that bungling a fool as to go 'live' with irrelevant or impractical experiments. No, the big ammunition comes with snide suggestions that he has lost his marbles, especially in his relation of how the device has come about.

It appears he was approached by Edwin Rickman, a man of no scientific training (according to the Daily Express) about 6 months before. Rickman had had a vivid recurring dream in which he had attended a meeting of a learned society and saw a scientist place a small box on a kitchen spring-balance. The pointer registered 15lbs. When the scientist pulled a switch the weight dropped to 10lb. He then opened the box to reveal two electrically driven gyroscopes, each on the end of a rotating arm. He was so impressed by this that he made a drawing, and patented it (No 11353/74 dated 14 March 74). He contacted Laithwaite, because of his reputation as the inventor of the linear electric motor, who with the aid of another amateur inventor, Alex Jones (one of the defenders in the NS correspondence) evolved the form shown at the RI. And like the Dean device, 14 years ago, talk is again of space-drives and silent propulsion of boats. "But it is the consequences for the whole of mechanical and Atomic theory that may be really shattering," said Laithwaite. (Daily Express, 8 Nov 74. Credit: Peter Weston.)

And it is not surprising to find Laithwaite making sure Rickman (and Jones) attended his RI lecture thus completing the circle in a startling example of precognition. Was it good manners only? Add a touch of engineer's attention to detail, & a sensible hedging of bets, methinks. I'm sure, too that this will become a classic in the history of revelatory discoveries, alongside Kekule's Benzene formula, and many others.

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1) "Final Report on the Dean Device." Editorial by John W Campbell. ANALOG Science Fact & Fiction April 61. VolXVII No4.

Dean, an American housing mortgage official, patented his device in 1956 (No 2,886,976.) and also used a gyro-type arrangement of counter-rotating masses. According to Campbell, he had spent a few thousand dollars on various models including a true aerial version to which he beamed power for its motors. Photos, I am told appeared in the American but not the British edition of its first disclosure by Campbell, in ASTOUNDING Science Fact & Fiction, Oct 61. Vol XVI, No8. This also contains an account of Campbell's efforts to get the Office of Naval Research and NASA, both of whom had files on the device from Dean's abortive applications, to conduct practical appraisals of its capabilities. Campbell never tired of pointing out that the first duty of science was to look into all possibilities, and that if that alone was not enough incentive, what about policical advantage? He wrote: "The modern nuclear submarine is, in fact, a fully competant space vehicle...lacking only the Dean Drive." (Or equivalent.)

Campbell never lost interest. In 1962, he published a paper, "The Fourth Law of Motion" by Dr William O Davis, in ANALOG,(Aug 62. Vol XVIII No8) which,though a little out of place in the science-fiction magazine, nevertheless gave opportunity to discuss the theoretical Dean effect of a reactionless thrust. It was also an interesting analysis of gyroscopic motion generally.

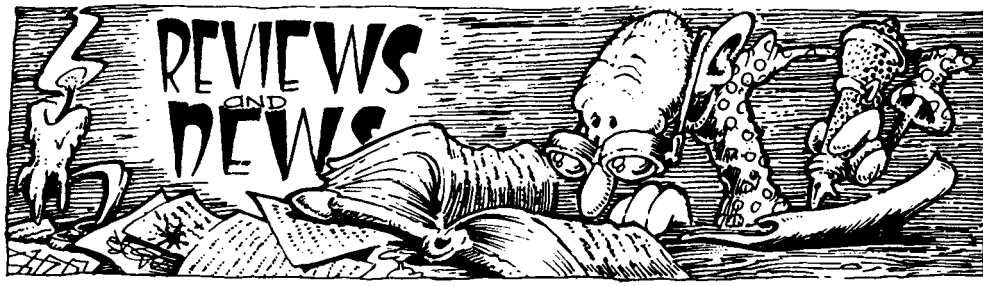
I also remember a further follow-up, which I can't find at the moment, must have been 1963/4, that Westinghouse had bought up, or were otherwise investigating the Dean Device in a secret project. And that Dean came to England and Germany to take out patents there, but was persuaded against it and whisked back to the States. Something like that - perhaps someone can put me right on that? But the whole story was not, is not, yet known - and so relevant in these energy-crisis days.

WHIRLWINDS.....Cont:

Mr Morris said: "To our utter amazement, the mass of hay was lifted gradually some two or three hundred feet high, while it was being quickly carried in a straight line and increasing only slightly in height for about a couple of miles, after which it slowly lost height in the next half-mile or so, and finally came to rest on a pasture field at a point slightly higher than the one from which it started its journey. Our attention was riveted to the spectacle; it was only after it was all over that we began to realise our good fortune in not being wrapped up and carried away wholesale, seeing we were so near to the incident at the time." The hay took 15 to 20 minutes to travel and passed over the Bethel and Bwlchyffridd areas of Aberhafesp before landing in the field. The Morris brothers had some difficulty in convincing their neighbour of the stack's curious transporting - since he firmly believed the incident was a prank by local youths.

This latter incident conforms more nearly to the textbook whirlwind - but we underline the detail that interests us as verging on the heretical. The above stories were from issues of the paper mentioned, dated 7th, 14th and 28th July 1974. Credit, as stated, to: Janet Bord.

But what of the earlier incidents? We remember a line from Chapter Four of LO!, where Fort has been discussing the 'snatchings' of clothes-lines into windless skies -- "A suggestion that is not so sensible is that...somebody had learned the secrets of teleportation, and to avoid attracting much attention in any one place was experimenting in places far apart."



REVIEWS

A REVISED COSMOLOGY by Merrill B Taylor. Available from the author at: 1309 Broadway, Little Rock, Arkansas 72202, USA. $3.00. An unexpected and exceedingly curious paper that sets out to rexamine the very fundamental issues of the modern physical cosmologies. Indeed, by stepping back to observe the creation of matter, instead of essentially destruction-derived, Taylor builds interestingly on some of the theories that were pushed aside in the Eistein breakthrough. Einstein himself was constantly reworking his General Theory to compensate for the postulated (and not proved) Riemann Space, in an attempt to answer EA Milne's two questions: "What is it that is curved? And how is it curved?" Instead Taylor postulates Plenum Space to replace Riemann curved space, and finds a whole new world of interesting effects and understandable causes. Plenum Space, as I understand it, is evolved when all the radiating bodies in the universe, all moving relatively to one another, thus fill the whole of space with radiation travelling in all possible directions. And from the constant, and universally consistant events where fractionated radiations meet head on, fundamental particles are brought into being. This process and its effects lead to startlingly different conceptions of gravitation; wave mechanics; faster-than-light theory; the Michaelson-Morley experiment; Einstein's General Theory; strange particles; and Taylor's insistance that compared to today's destruction-orientated physics, his theory should be relatively easier and cheaper to prove and develop ; and, he says, will have a more fundamentally radical effect in terms of spin-off effects, eg a true space-drive. Now this emergence of new ideas on space-drives at this time is interesting (see 'Scientific Curiosities'and our discussion on Laithwaite's and Dean's reactionless thrust devices.) Your editor, who knows nothing about physics, really felt he had learnt something after reading Taylor's paper. I hope it will stimulate further analyses of the idea of Plenum Space, and though I cannot assess its value, I do think it deserves attention, in the interests of science. A point of interest also, is that the author's initial speculation were brought about by his observance of an almost right-angle turn by a UFO, which caused him to work back from the type of forces which would allow such non-G manoeuvers.

EXTRATERRESTRIAL INTERVENTION : THE EVIDENCE. by Jacques Bergier & the Editors of INFO. Henry Regnery Co, Chicago; $7.95; pp164; ISBN:0.8092.-8369.7. First published in France only as LE LIVRE DE L'INEXPLICABLE and recently translated, it suffers from the impression that it was hastily and/or loosely put together. Nevertheless,the book contains its main interest in the many articles drawn from the early issues of the International Fortean Organisation Journal by Ron and Paul Willis, Andrew E Rothovius, Vincent Gaddis, Loren Coleman & Mark Hall, Ivan Sanderson, and a few others. The bulk of this material will be familiar to those who have read the original INFO issues, but to those who haven't. well! after reading this lot you'll wonder why you ever bothered with von Daniken when you could get the real stuff. Ron Willis's "The Burning People"(spontaneous combustion of humans), and "The Acambaro Figurines" (30,000 clay minatures, 3,600 years old, from Mexico); Paul Willis's "The Devil's Hoofmarks" (the infamous Devon event); AT Horak's "The Mysterious Moonshaft" (just that, inside a mountain in Czechoslovakia); and others on anomalous artifacts, UFOs in the New World, "Are there still Dinosaurs?", and Saquatch, etc are all classics of their type, and will no doubt cause a stir when they pass into common record. Bergier, apart from collecting this lot together with a 'slight' preface to each has very little in the book: a summary of the Borley Rectory hauntings; a fall of stones on the Hospital at Arcachon, and an odd electrical/meteoric (?) phenomenon in Rebozer, USSR, both previously unknown to me; and a piece on the poltergeist-girl, Anne-Marie Schneider of Rosenheim, Germany (that used to dominate the pages of the Paralab Journal in 1970.) - which is a small amount of Bergier for your money if you've read the rest. Despite this, I think it will become a useful reference edition, and in the general scarcity of 'true' Fortean books, the most important addition to the available literature in 1974. More than that, it gives me great personal pleasure to see items from the INFO Journal in general print. It should do the business of Fortean studies generally some good.

QUICKSILVER HERITAGE by Paul Screeton. Thorsons Publishers Ltd, Northants; £4.50; pp304; extensive index and bibliography; ISBN:0.7225.0282.6.

"Between the covers of this book is a guide-book, which leads the reader from stylish stone circles, to gaunt standing stones, to crumbling tumuli, to towering pines, by way of lines straight and true. Here too is a manual on the workings of a system of spiritual physics...This is not a book written to entertain or educate. Those who seek within these pages for great truths will be disappointed; those who wish to be titillated by sensationalism will be displeased; those who think that there may be easy answers to the puzzles of prehistory will be disheartened; but those who wish to learn by their own efforts will find guidance."

Thus, Paul Screeton justly sums up his own approach of cramming the book with all kinds of hints, synopses and signposts. There are four main sections: the first deals with the physical attributes of Leys, techniques of Ley hunting, and in passing a history of the interest in the 'mercurial' lines. Secondly we are given a summary of what is known about the megalithic culture from the Ley tradition, and since most of this is at variance with the opinions of the 'Jealous Professors', there are adequate opportunities for hearty swipes at Dr Glyn Daniel and the other Aunt Sallys of archaeology. Thirdly, we are shown the relationships between Leys, Holy sites, etc, and Astronomy, Alchemy and terrestrial Zodiacs, giving many references to sites for the first time outside the pages of THE LEY HUNTER, which Paul edits. Fourthly, the last half of the book ranges over the many esoteric subjects that comprise Ley studies today: Giants, Fairies and Elementals that seem closely bound in tradition and manifestation to the elements of Leys; The Dragon Power and lore; Spiritual physics and metaphysics; and Fortean correlations with gravity anomalies, St Elmo's Fire, disappearances, and cursed stones. The whole book is rounded off with a pretty complete bibliography and a listing of major articles from TLH and elsewhere.

I must mention the striking cover, which looked like a Turner rendition of a Needfire silhouetting a hill, but is in fact a photograph. The whole book is well produced, as it should be for the price. My only quibble - a small one - is that many of the cameos of different aspects of our 'Quicksilver Heritage' stop just as they were getting very interesting indeed. On the one hand this indicates that Ley studies are still in their early days, their great enigmas still a challenge -- and on the other, that the book as a whole does titillate and guide the reader's curiosity rather than satisfy it, and as a Fortean I bow to that acomplishment. 'QH' will undoubtedly become the book to which newcomers to Leys will be directed, and thus fills a gap in the literature that has been felt for some time.

And in paperback:

THE OLD STRAIGHT TRACK by Alfred Watkins. Abacus; £1.25; 256pp; 131 illos & photos; ISBN: 0.349. 13704.8. The book that started the modern interest in Leys & megalithic artifacts. This edition has a splendid photo of a classic 'tump' on the cover, which I don't recall seeing elsewhere.

LETTERS

From: Colin Bord.
'Hollow Earth' Photos, NEWS 7/22,23.

I see in your review of Brinsley Le Poer Trench's recent book SECRET OF THE AGES that you have been more than a little puzzled over the photographs showing the alleged hole at the North Pole. I haven't seen the book yet, but I heard the author talking about it on the radio, and as he said that he had acquired the pictures from an American publisher, and as you mention that they are photographs obtained by the ESSA 7 satellite, they are undoubtedly the same pictures as Mr Ray Palmer of Amherst, Wisconsin, published in his 'Flying Saucers' magazine in June 1970. ((Indeed they are the same ones - Ed.)) This publication was one of the less laudable American ventures of the 1960s (I believe it has since folded,) using unreliable and sensational material, and given to making sensational claims without any substance. The magazine also carried advertising for various books published by Ray Palmer, and often these were of a sensationalist and unsubstantiated nature.

In the June 1970 issue of 'Flying Saucers', the cover carried a picture of the circular Earth with wispy clouds and a large black area in the centre; beneath this photograph is 'First Photos of the Hole at the Pole', 'Satellites ESSA 3 and ESSA 7 Penetrate Cloud Cover', 'Mariners Also Photograph Martian Polar Opening'. (Needless to say, no evidence is given for this last claim; it is simply made again briefly in the editorial.) Although the cover blurb says the satellites 'Penetrate Cloud Cover', the editorial states that there was "a total lack of cloud cover over the North Pole". In a later issue of the magazine when Palmer refuted criticisms of his statements, he wrote that infra-red was used to photograph through the cloud (although there are still plenty of other clouds to be seen in the photo.) In the June 1970 issue editorial he states that the photographs are "official, unretouched photos". Yet in his answer to a reader's letter in September 1970 he writes: "The dark portion of the first photograph of the North Pole (and now I speak as an editor, publisher, printer, photographer, etc) is so 'obviously' retouched it is painful." This sloppy thinking and casual use of words seems to be typical of Palmer. Inside the magazine are three more pictures, two of the South Pole showing it covered in white cloud or ice, and another of the North Pole with a black centre 'hole' that has a soft diffused edge. All these pictures were captioned as being taken in either January 1967 or November 1968.

Three months later, in September 1970, he published about six pages of reader's letters, which now gave the following explanations for the black area:-

1) The pictures as printed were originally composed of a mosaic of photographs of small sect-

ions of the Earth's surface matched together to form an overall view - a common technique in aerial and satellite photography. One reason why this is necessary is because the whole of the planet is not illuminated by the sun at any one time.

2) As the North Pole is tilted away from the Sun during the winter months, it gets very few hours of sunlight during a 24 hour period of revolution. On midwinter's day the sun does not rise above the horizon at all; conversely on midsummer's night it does not set. In Britain we experience this same effect to a lesser extent, hence our long winter nights and short summer nights. The ESSA 7 photographs were taken during November, and so the farthest northern latitudes were too poorly lit to be of use photographically.

3) A grid of longitude and latitude with numerals every 20^{0}, and also the outlines of the continental land masses, has been superimposed on the photographs before being released for publication. These marks are just discernable on the magazine cover reproduction, so it is easy to work out where the edge of the 'hole' comes. It is between 60^{0} and 70^{0} North. If we consult an atlas it shows that a great deal of known land such as Iceland, northern Scandinavia, Greenland, Alaska, etc, must be within the 'hole', which must be somewhere in the region of 3000 miles across. ((The Arctic Circle, that imaginary boundary of the North polar region seems to coincide with the fringe of the dark area at $66^{0}32'$ North - Ed.))

Although Palmer used a great deal of space, he made no satisfactory argument against these straightforward points, which sound decidedly more convincing than his ramblings on the subject.

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From: Roger Randle.
Ghost - Leys - and Phantom Cottage.

Many thanks for NEWS 7 - it gets better with each issue. I heard an interesting little snippet on Radio Solent which may be of interest, concerning Poole (Dorset) Guildhall/Museum. Apparently the spectre of one Henry Jubber makes a fairly regular appearance on a narrow staircase leading to the top floor of the Guildhall, between 0930 and 1000 am. Several of the staff have seen him and report that his presence is accompanied by the usual cold current of air when he passes. Unlike many ghost stories, however, Henry Jubber's name and role are not lost. He was an officer of the council responsible for the operation (and accounts) of Poole Quay during the early 19th century. He was suspected of being party to a revenue fraud just prior to the annual council meeting held to audit the accounts of each department, and was discovered hanging in one of the cells on the top floor (which was used as a 'lock-up' at that time, for the police court held on a lower floor). I tell you this because I haven't seen it recorded elsewhere in any of the standard gazeteers.

I enjoyed Janet Bord's piece even if she did bring home to me that I was (at one stage) guilty of finding literally a spider's web of leys on one 1"OS sheet! However, I cannot agree with her concerning accuracy. Despite what they tell you, 1:50,000 OS maps are notoriously inaccurate - and considering that 1mm is equivalent to 50 metres on the ground, this is hardly surprising. What frequently appear to be dead alignments on the 1:50,000 sheet show a proclivity to definite deviations on larger scale sheets. Ideally, high contrast aerial photographs taken with a lens of high resolution should be the answer, but how many of us have access to such equipment? Anyway, I mustn't quibble over small details.

The mystery of the disappearing cottage on Dartmoor (mentioned in Janet Bord's article) put me in mind of a similar incident reported in "THE RIVER DART" by Ruth Manning Saunders (Westway Books, London, 1951) - a goldmine of Dartmoor lore, legend and fact of this type. I quote:

"One day on the moors round Hayford to the west of Buckfastleigh, three girls and their father - all strangers to the neighbourhood - went out on a shooting expedition. As so often happens in this haunted region, the party got separated, the girls could not find their father, and making for home in the darkness they lost their way. On and on they walked not knowing where they were going, until to their joy they saw a light ahead, hurried towards it, and found a roadside cottage. Ruddy firelight danced out from an uncurtained window, warming the night with a friendly glow. The three girls looked through the window and saw an old man and woman sitting crouched over the fire. "We never moved from where we stood," declared the girls afterward. But, on a sudden, lo, the fire, the old man and woman, and the entire cottage vanished; and night, like a black bag, fell over the place."

Despite the overdramatisation, the story is true - indeed, the villagers had seen the cottage before - folk memory had preserved some hazy remembrance of a dwelling on the site, long disappeared. Crossing (probably the greatest and most reliable of the Dartmoor antiquarians) had a similar experience in the region of Ugborough Moor, although he put it down to the mist playing tricks with his mind. Dartmoor, of course, is full of such stories, ranging from borderline experiences of the Wish Hounds, or the buccas (the Dartmoor version of the goblin miners legends, ie as in the legend of Chaw Gully) to the rather more tangible and factual experiences of the Hairy Hands, or Devil's Footprints type. One concerning the 'Strange Fire in Wistmans Wood' in 1886 is enclosed. ((Because of lack of space we shall keep this back till we next run our 'Fires' section. Roger also sent us the damndest item we've come across in a long time, which should appear next issue along with some fireballs and odd lights - Ed.)).

did you see....?

'Unsolved Mysteries of the Great Pyramid' by Ronald Schiller. READER'S DIGEST, Dec 74, pp140-144.

'Growing Cult of the Pyramid' by John Cornwall. OBSERVER MAGAZINE, 15 Dec 74. pp46,47,49,50,52, 54,56, 57,59, 61. Good illos, and an interesting note on the Californian company that markets the razor-blade sharpeners, etc.

'The Ice-Age Cometh' by Nigel Calder. RADIO TIMES, 16/22 Nov 74. pp74 on.

'Never try to coax a ghost' by Innes Gray. TV TIMES, 21 Dec/3 Jan 74/75. For what its worth, ghostly relations from Tommy Steele, and Telly Savalas.

'Deadliest 'Big Foot' Monster of Them All' by Walter Hardiston. MALE magazine, Jan 75, pp14, 15, 74, 75, 76. BF events in Australia.

'Long Delayed Signals may echo from Moon's ghost' by Ian Ridpath. NEW SCIENTIST, 3 Oct 74, p9.

'Apeman on the Loose! Tracking California's Bigfoot' by Paul Ciotti, COAST magazine, Oct 74.

'A case of Stigmata' by LF Early & JE Lifschutz. ARCHIVES OF GENERAL PSYCHIATRY, Feb 74, Vol 30, pp197-200. We shall be carrying a note on this in a future issue.

'The Doctor Fox Lecture: A Paradigm of Educational Seduction' by DH Naftalin, JE Ware jr and FA Donnelly. JOURNAL OF MEDICAL EDUCATION, July 73, Vol 48, pp630-635. You may remember this from NEWS 5 p7.

'Fire-walking Controversy Blazes' MINEAPOLIS TRIBUNE, 6 Oct 74, p13F.

'Universe may be 10 Billion Years Old' by Harry S Pease. MILWAUKEE JOURNAL, 27 Sept 74, p21.

'The Cottingley Fairies' by Nick Witchell. MAYFAIR magazine, Dec 74, Vol 9 No 12, pp40-42,51, 74. Turned out to be little more than a re-write of Edward Gardner's 1945 book published by the Theosophical Society.

'Geller' notes galore in each issue of NEW SCIENTIST between 7 Nov and 12 Dec 74. (Yawn.)

'The Way Home is Blowing in the Wind.' by Jeremy Cherfas. NEW SCIENTIST 28 Nov 74. On bird migration.

'Aerosol Sprays & The Ozone Shield' by Prof. S Rowland...how our misuse of 'Freon' is destroying our protective ozone layer in upper atmosphere.
'The End of The Engligh Landscape.' by Jon Tinker. How and why our land will never be the same again NEW SCIENTIST, 5 Dec 74.

'Mental Maps for Navigation' by Dr K Oatley... human direction finding this time....
'Psi Story.' by Dr Robert Walgate...on the implications of the first new stable particle discovered in ten years. NEW SCIENTIST, 19 Dec 74.

'Commonsense & Sir William Crookes.' by Eric Deeson...on the relationship between the development of the Radiometer, and his occult investigations. NEW SCIENTIST, 26 Dec 74.

'Lysenko - Beyond the Horizon.' Following the BBC 2 screening of the TV 'Horizon' documentary on the Lysenko affair, further notes on the effects on Russian science since Lysenko was removed from office 10 years ago. NEW SCIENTIST, 9 Jan 75.

'Mystery Gamma Bursts.' SPACEFLIGHT, Jan 75, p24.

'Eyewitness Testimony.' by Robert Buckhout. SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN, Dec 74; Vol 231

'Eyewitness Testimony.' by Robert Buckhout.
'The Search for Black Holes.' by Kip S Thorne.
SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN, Dec 74; Vol 231 No 6.

OTHER SCENES: a special double issue on British Folklore, put out by John Wilcock. $1.00, from Dawes Press, 81a Dawes Road, London SW6.

THE LEY HUNTER 60/61, Oct/Nov 74. Contains: 'Two Somerset Sites.'; 'Bristol Cross Sites.'; 'Alignment of Ancient Sites in the Region of the Essex-Suffolk Border.'; 'A Suggestion as to the Possible Origin of Churches that are Dedicated to St Michael and St Andrew.'; 'Power Centres - Whence did they Originate?'; and 'Divining - A Positive Way of Ley Hunting.' TLH is edited by Paul Screeton, 5 Egton Drive, Seaton Carew, Hartlepool, Cleveland TS25 2AT. UK:£150 // USA:$6.00.

LANTERN 8, Winter 74/75. Contains: 'The Haunting of Glasshouse Row' (an astonishing tale of poltergeistery in Great Yarmouth in 1797.); Notes on local curiosities; 'More Mysterious Stones' (on Ley mark-stones in Norfolk.); 'Of Fairy Folk and Will O' The Wisp.'(on some associated Norfolk legends and traditions.); and a UFO report, and news round-up. Published by the Borderline Science Investigation Group (BSIG), edited by I Bunn, 3 Dunwich Way, Oulton Broad, Lowestoft, Suffolk. 65p/year, or single issues at 16p.

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Compilation Credits: Mark Hall; Phil Ledger, Fran Steve Moore, Nigel Watson.

ADS

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...and don't forget to mention THE NEWS...